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NEW TIMES

A SOVIET WEEKLY OF WORLD AFFAIRS

SOVIET-JAPANESE DIALOGUE

MIDDLE EAST: NEW THREAT

BATTLE FOR A CLEAN GANGES

FOR A FUTURE WITHOUT WAR, WITHOUT ARMS

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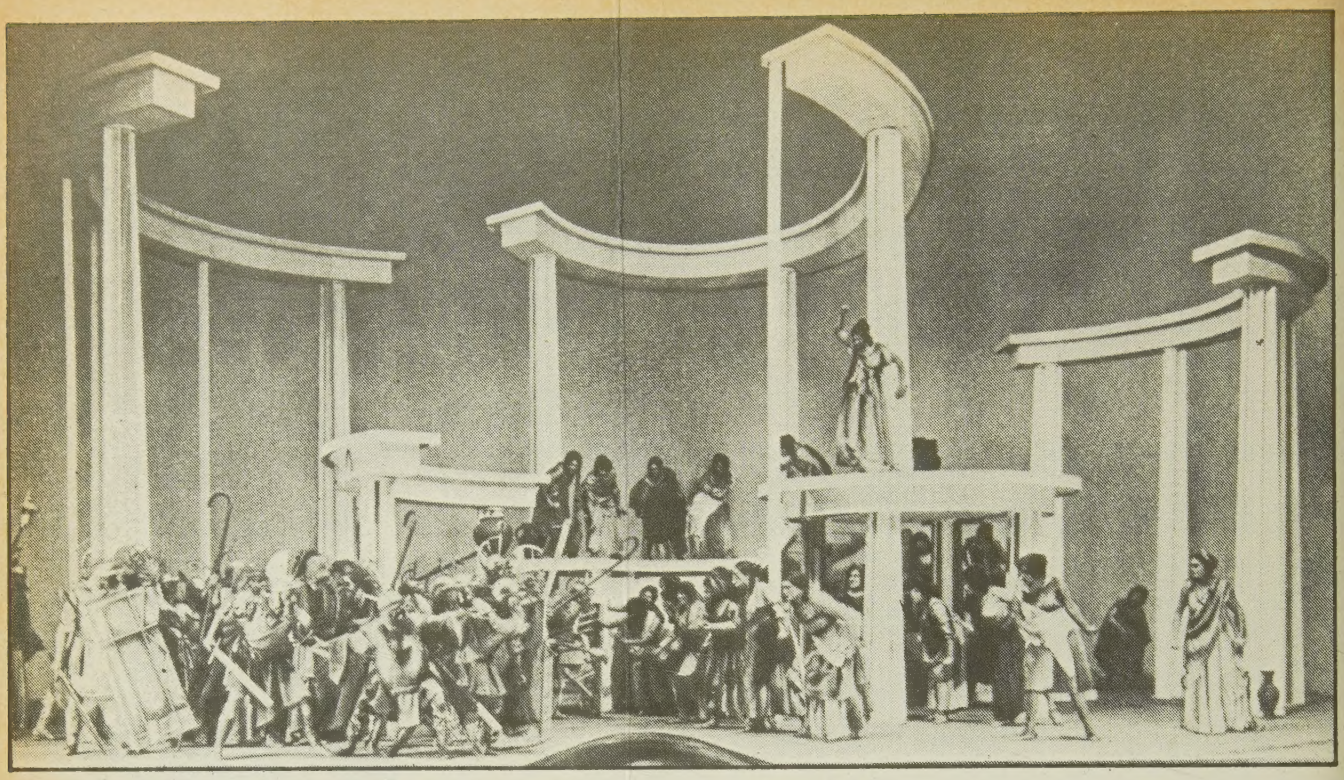
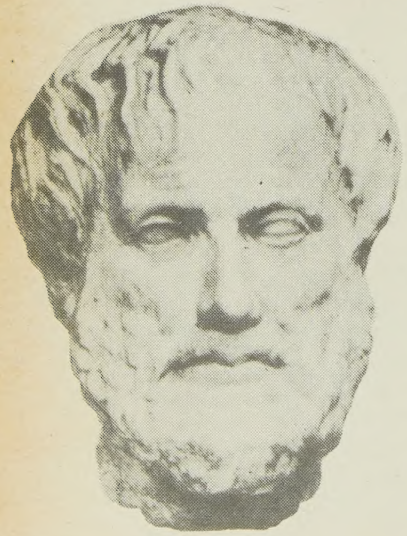


Scene from the play "Lysistrata" on the stage of the Nemirovich-Danchenko Musical Theatre in Moscow. Photo taken in 1926. From the collection of the Bakhrushin State Central Theatrical Museum.

1986-INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF PEACE

For only slightly more than two of the thirty-three centuries of recorded human history the clash of swords, the scream of bullets and the thunder of guns was not heard on our planet. Nearly as many people have died in wars as now populate our Earth and the cost of all the material values destroyed in the flames of war exceeds $100 quintillions (one digit and 20 zeros).

Yet, incredible though it may seem, there have always been those who justify and glorify wars. The German philosopher Nietzsche held that bloodletting was the way to cure society of all ills. His compatriot and contemporary General von Moltke maintained that wars were an element of the world order established from on high. The cult of force was propounded by the ideologists of fascism as an eternal and natural law of history. And the "admissibility" of wars —thermonuclear included— is propounded today by imperialist propaganda.



Sculpture of Aristotle. A Roman copy of the Greek original (last quarter of the 4th century B.C.). From the History of Arts Museum (Vienna).

But people do not want to accept the fatal inevitability of mutual destruction. Mankind has long yearned for peace. The heroes of the folk tales of Asia, Europe and America have always dreamed of a golden age of peace. In the Hindu Vedas (15th-5th century B.C.) the ideal society was a society of "universal harmony." The Avesta, the sacred book of the ancient Persians, describes the past as an epoch of peace and tranquility. For the ancient thinkers Plato (427-347 B.C.) and Aristotle (384-322 B.C.) the idea of peace—in Hellenic society, of course— was the principal tenet of their philosophy, and Lao Tse, the Chinese scholar of the 7th century B.C., envisioned an anti-war utopia.

The great Aristophanes (445-385 B.C.) inscribed an enduring page in the annals of world literature. His famed comedy "Lysistrata" has been on the repertoires of world theatres for 2,396 years. And with good reason. Is there not a modern ring to the words uttered by Lysistrata (the name itself means "she who disbands the host"): "All strife is surely caused by money!" In the search for those who "constantly incite hostility," she pours her wrath on the powers that be for whom bloodshed is a source of profit. "It is we who suffer most from wars," Lysistrata says to the women who share her fervent desire to end wars.

The passionate anti-war message of Aristophanes' plays is part of the heritage of the progressive culture of today. Together with the works of other humanist writers and thinkers of antiquity, they serve as convincing proof that the ideas of peace are not subject to the ravages of time. They are eternal.

OUR CHOICE

All thinking people the world over are studying the statement by CPSU General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev, discussing the Soviet Union's latest initiatives addressed to the United States and the other nuclear powers, to all governments and peoples in the world. This important document strikes a responsive chord in the hearts and minds of millions of people in all parts of the globe, for it has a bearing on their destinies, on the future of world civilization, indeed, on the paramount imperatives of our time. Behind it lies the choice made by the Soviet land in October 1917, our ardent desire to live at peace with all nations.

It is in place to recall that in the early years of the Soviet state its enemies contended that its peace policy stemmed from economic weakness, a desire to survive. Today, too, there are those who reason in the same terms. Adventurers count on being able by means of an endless arms race to exhaust the Soviet Union economically and to impede our constructive labours. It would seem that the enemies of socialism have learned nothing from the history of the nearly 70 years of the existence of the Soviet land. Yet the fact remains that the U.S.S.R. today is a great world power and that its latest initiatives have been prompted not by weakness, but by a fervent desire to extirpate all evil on earth, by a sense of responsibility to the present and future generations.

The nuclear age requires of all states and of all politicians a new political thinking. The Soviet Union urges all men to rise above national egoism, tactical considerations, controversies and strife, for these are worthless in comparison with the preservation of the greatest value of all—peace and a secure future. Our proposals are simple and concrete. We want humanity to enter the 21st century without nuclear weapons, under a peaceful sky and a peaceful outer space. How this can be ensured is the message of our programme.

The comprehensive peace initiatives of the U.S.S.R. have faced a number of Western governments with the alternative of either continuing to rely on nuclear missiles or hearkening to the voice of reason. This crucial choice should be made first of all by the leaders of the United States.

There is a profound meaning in the fact that our proposals are not only addressed to governments but also submitted for the judgement of all peoples. Whether there is to be a turn for the better on the international scene in the near future or not depends primarily on the governments. But the peoples too can and should say their weighty word. Firmly expressed popular will is a powerful force that cannot but be reckoned with.

The people of the United States have evidently not yet taken a decisive stand. But they too do not need the arms buildup, which brings enormous profits only to the arms tycoons. The "star wars" programme offers a still greater bonanza for the death merchants and will swallow up the astronomical sum of 1.5-2 trillion dollars, which the U.S. taxpayers will have to underwrite. For the sake of comparison it should be borne in mind that annual military spending by all the countries of the world now runs to about $800 billion.

Where our steel goes—for swords or ploughshares—is by no means a matter of indifference to us. If compelled to do so, the Soviet Union can develop any weapon. But we are opposed to weapons in outer space. We are against nuclear weapons in general. The energy of the atom must be harnessed only to peaceful purposes. On this score the people of the Soviet Union and its government, the CPSU and the U.S.S.R. Supreme Soviet, which has sent a relevant message to the U.S. Congress, are unanimous. Not military confrontation, not fist law, but peaceful coexistence and cooperation should be the law of human intercourse. Not suspicion and fear, but trust and confidence in the morrow should prevail on our planet.

Viewed from a spaceship in orbit the earth looks small indeed. But how beautiful it is! Its inhabitants are weary of living in expectation of tragedy. They want to rejoice under clear skies, to bring up their children, to create, to live in friendship with both their next-door neighbours and the dwellers of other continents. And how many urgent common concerns they have! The CPSU General Secretary's statement opens to all mankind new boundless vistas of constructive endeavour. For only in a world without nuclear, chemical, or other lethal weapons can the ever more pressing global problems be seriously tackled. Only by rerouting the huge resources now senselessly wasted on war preparations can the beauty of the world be preserved, the seas and oceans protected from pollution, the forests and farmlands saved, the hungry fed, disease stamped out and scores of countries helped to extricate themselves from the fetters of indebtedness and backwardness and to rise to their full stature.

One should like to believe that the entire world will make the right choice, that more millions will rally under the banner of peace, and that the way will be opened to a life without wars and armaments.

FROM OUR MAILBAG

● I like the dynamism of Soviet foreign and domestic policy. I want to wish the Soviet people every success in achieving the great objectives outlined in the draft of the new text of the CPSU Programme. It inspires our people also to redouble effort on the labour front.

Emanuel NOVOTNY
Pribram, Czechoslovakia

● I read with great interest Natalia Safronova's article on Pétain in your issue No. 48 for 1985. I fully agree with the author. For me and for all those who suffered at the hands of the nazis and the collaborators, Pétain was and remains a traitor. On that August day in 1945, when he was sentenced to death, I said to my friends: "If a special command consisting of the victims of the invaders and their henchmen were needed to carry out the sentence I would willingly join it as a volunteer." As for the letter by one Pierre Pachier of Paris addended to the article, in my opinion he is either a former "collabo" who yearns for the days when his friends, the nazis, were lording it in France or else one of the kind of thugs the fascist Le Pen recruits for his "national front."

Roger LESIEUR
Saint-Quentin, France

● I would like to comment again on one of the items in your journal—"Sorry, Mr McFarlane" (No. 45, 1985). I have read something in our own press about Rambo, the Tarzan-like superman who takes delight in killing and shoots from the hip, and I even saw excerpts from the film "Rambo" on F.R.G. television. Why does the U.S. need such a picture? It has already spread the seeds of rambomania. Is it not perhaps designed to accustom Americans to the possibility of open interference in the internal affairs of other countries, Nicaragua, for instance? Everything, after all, begins with ideological brainwashing. Which is exactly what Goebbels and his propaganda ministry did when preparing World War II. And what preceded the adoption of the so-called "strategic defence initiative"? The film hit "Star Wars." So be on your guard. "Rambo" is not just intended for box office receipts.

Wilfried BUDICH
Cottbus, G.D.R.

Your People in the News appears very irregularly. I think it would be a good idea to make it a permanent feature and perhaps even to change it somewhat, giving not just biographical information about some new head of state or government but also the developments that led to a change in leadership in one or another country.

Alexander LEKHIN
Temirtau, Karaganda Region, U.S.S.R.

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For a nuclear-free 21st century. See pp. 3-6 for a comment on the epoch-making new Soviet initiatives in the field of disarmament.

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CALL TO THE WHOLE WORLD

VLADLEN KUZNETSOV

Lenin's Decree on Peace announced the rise of a socialist state that had declared war on war. In 1946, at the dawn of the nuclear age, the Soviet Union submitted for consideration by the United Nations a proposal to prohibit the production and use of atomic weapons. In 1982 the U.S.S.R. undertook in the U.N. the unilateral commitment not to be the first to use nuclear weapons. And on January 15 this year, a document that ranks among these historic foreign policy initiatives of the CPSU and the Soviet government was made public—a statement by CPSU General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev which set forth a programme for the total elimination of nuclear weapons throughout the world within the next 15 years.

The new Soviet programme has been put forward at a juncture in our nuclear-missile and space age when the energy of the atom could either become the greatest of boons for humanity or lead to the tragedy of self-destruction; when the threat of "star wars" hangs over the world community; when nuclear weapons, through acquisition by countries whose rulers are by no means distinguished by common sense, threaten to spread all over the globe; when worldwide military spending has run to $800 billion annually and their growth in recent years has begun to exceed the growth rate of the total world product, and when the danger of accidental outbreak of war through some computer error is steadily mounting.

What other warnings of the catastrophe ahead need there be? What further evidence is required to persuade the world of the need to limit, reduce and eliminate nuclear weapons? What additional arguments have to be adduced? All the needed evidence exists. What is missing is the most important thing—actual, physical disarmament, without which humanity will never be rid of fear of the nuclear Armageddon.

The Soviet Union is now offering the entire world community a truly unique chance, a historic opportunity, to rid itself of its greatest enemy—the arms race, the runaway nuclear buildup, while it can still be checked. This above all is the purport of the 15-year Soviet programme for the abolition of the most lethal of all weapons. "The set of new foreign policy initiatives that we are proposing," the statement by Mikhail Gorbachev says, "is intended to make it possible for mankind to approach the year 2000 under peaceful skies and with peaceful space, without fear of nuclear, chemical or any other threat of annihilation and fully confident of its own survival and of the continuation of the human race."

The entire human race, with the exception, of course, of a handful of nuclear maniacs, welcomes the Soviet initiative. People see in it an Ariadne's thread capable of leading humanity out of the seemingly closed labyrinth of the accumulation of engines of destruction over the past more than 40 years. Many no doubt will ask whether this is not a mere daydream, which will be shattered by the grim realities of our time, the frenzied opposition of the enemies of disarmament. Is the Soviet plan realistic and what is there in it that is new, for has the Soviet Union not advanced before this plans that have remained on paper?

The new set of initiatives did not spring up in a vacuum. It is based on past experience in the struggle for putting an end to the arms race. And that struggle has produced tangible results. There exist today more than 30 international agreements which in one or another measure check some aspects of the arms buildup. There is the Soviet-American ABM Treaty of 1972 and agreements on the limitation of strategic offensive armaments which have been observed until now by both sides. These practical accomplishments offer a starting-off point for further efforts. The Soviet Union takes full account also of such factors as the growing influence exerted by the mass anti-nuclear movement on policy; the positive shift in the position of the People's Republic of China on problems of disarmament, manifest, in particular, in its commitment not to be the first to use nuclear weapons; and the more realistic tendencies in their approach to nuclear war evident in Western top echelons, tendencies that found reflection in official Washington showing an inclination to agree with the thesis long upheld by Moscow that nuclear war must never be unleashed and that in it there can be no victors. This approach was jointly put on record by the Soviet and U.S. leaders in Geneva. Confident that statesmanship and political realism will triumph, the Soviet leadership and the leaders of the other socialist countries are determined to bring the influence of the entire socialist community to bear in this respect, to use the force of their own example to influence the positions of others with a view to ensuring on a global scale an effective approach to the practical solution of the problem of disarmament.

The new Soviet initiatives are a new and creative development of the ideas of general and complete disarmament which the Soviet Union has advocated ever since its inception. These initiatives take into account the achievements and lessons of the past, both the favourable and the negative tendencies of the present time, and the different stands taken by the states, in a word, the sum total of the factors that make up the present political and military-strategic situation. This is an in-depth, realistic programme infused with optimism. Hence the significance of the by no means illusory outlook it opens to the world.

The Soviet plan is realistic also because, taking into account the complexity of the problem and the divergence of state interests, it provides for the gradual, stage-by-stage elimination of nuclear weapons. The problem cannot be resolved at one go, and large-scale measures are in general difficult to carry out. Hence it is desirable to proceed from the relatively simple to the more complex, moving ahead from one measure to another, gradually bringing more countries into the process and accumulating experience in practical disarmament in some spheres and then carrying it over to others.

Stage One. Within five to eight years the Soviet Union and the United States would reduce by half their nuclear weapons capable of reaching each other's territories. On the remaining delivery vehicles of this kind each side would retain no more than 6,000 warheads.

Since nuclear and space weapons are linked by an objective organic interdependence which cannot be broken without upsetting strategic stability and parity, such a radical reduction is pos-

sible only if both the Soviet Union and the United States refrain from developing, testing and deploying space strike weapons. The creation of this type of weapon, as the Soviet Union has warned time and again, would dash all hopes for a reduction of nuclear weapons on earth.

It is further envisaged to eliminate the medium-range missiles of the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. in the European zone, both ballistic and cruise. This would be the first step towards completely ridding the European continent of nuclear weapons. It would be only logical for the United States to undertake the commitment not to transfer its strategic and medium-range missiles to other countries, and for Britain and France, not to increase their own nuclear armaments.

Stage Two. It should begin no later than 1990 and last for 5-7 years. The other nuclear powers would in this period gradually join the nuclear disarmament process. The U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. would continue the reductions agreed upon at the first stage and also take further measures to eliminate their medium-range nuclear weapons and freeze their tactical nuclear systems.

The reduction of the corresponding armaments by 50 per cent by the Soviet Union and the United States would be followed by another radical step—all nuclear powers would do away with their tactical nuclear weapons.

During this period the Soviet-American agreement on the prohibition of space strike weapons should become a multilateral arrangement with the obligatory participation of the leading industrial powers. All nuclear powers would discontinue testing nuclear weapons.

Stage Three. This stage should begin no later than 1995. During it the elimination of all remaining nuclear weapons would be completed. By the end of 1999 there would be no more nuclear weapons on Earth. A universal agreement never to allow the revival of these weapons would be worked out.

The programme of nuclear disarmament naturally includes such a top-priority practical step as the termination of all test explosions, which would close all avenues to the further modernization of nuclear weapons. Even if some part of the nuclear arsenals are reduced, the remainder could be modernized without difficulty if experiments are not banned, not to speak of the development of new types of weapons. The reduction of arsenals alone without prohibition of testing would not rid us of the nuclear threat.

Guided by these considerations, the Soviet Union has prolonged for another three months its unilateral moratorium on all nuclear explosions which expired on December 31, 1985. This moratorium will remain in force even longer if the U.S. likewise discontinued tests. The United States is once again urged to join in this initiative and to weigh the full significance and the obvious advantages for all of such a step.

As important as the elimination of nuclear weapons is, it would not rid humanity of all its anxieties and the dangers stalking it. There is also another means of mass destruction—chemical weapons. And there are also highly dangerous types of non-nuclear, conventional weapons. In view of this, a comprehensive approach is needed. That approach is envisaged in the Soviet programme.

In the Soviet Union's opinion, all the prerequisites exist for completely doing away with chemical weapons by the year 2000. It is proposed to dismantle on a reciprocal basis also the industrial facilities for the production of this barbaric means of mass destruction. The Soviet proposals envisage speeding up negotiations on the conclusion of an effective and verifiable international convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons and the destruction of their stockpiles, as was agreed at the Soviet-American summit in Geneva. There are also some interim measures that could accelerate progress. The Soviet Union proposes agreement on a multilateral basis not to transfer chemical weapons to anyone and not to station them on the territories of other countries.

The present level of military technology makes it possible to develop non-nuclear weapons based on new physical principles which would approximate for destructive power nuclear or other means of mass annihilation of human life. The reference is to beam, radio-wave, infrasonic, genetic, geophysical and other types of weapons. It is proposed to ban all these during the second stage.

Besides the removal of mass destruction weapons from national arsenals, the U.S.S.R. proposes the reduction of conventional armaments and armed forces. The start signal for this could be given by an agreement at the Vienna talks the contours of which have become more clearly defined in recent months. Progress could be facilitated also by the solution at the Stockholm Conference of the question of prior notification of large ground, naval and air force exercises. If this question as well as others cannot be resolved as yet comprehensively, they could be settled step by step.

The Soviet programme for the elimination by the end of the century of nuclear, chemical and other weapons is addressed to the whole world, for no one can afford to remain indifferent in face of a common threat. Its realization would open promising prospects for the improvement of the situation in diverse regions of our planet, including its "hot spots." The Soviet Union is against regional conflicts being used as a pretext for building up armaments and refusing to give effect to disarmament measures. Those who fan the flames of these conflicts have no intention of stopping the arms conveyors. Those who manufacture weapons are interested in expanding markets for them, in there being more regional conflicts, and the more protracted and savage the better. The U.S.S.R. is against the fanning of regional conflicts and the boosting of the arms trade.

Mikhail Gorbachev's statement allots a special place to Europe. It was this continent that began at one time to lay the groundwork for the transition from confrontation to détente, thereby offering an example of a new thinking and a new political psychology in approaching the problems of peace, cooperation and international confidence. Now, in the opinion of the Soviet leadership, Europe could undertake a new, special mission as a builder of détente. Ensuring security in Asia, where the problems of war and peace are no less acute than in Europe, could also have a stabilizing effect on the world situation.

The practical, realistic character of the Soviet Union's initiative is manifest also in its approach to control over disarmament measures—national and international control in all its forms, including on-the-spot verification. Thorough, effective, strict and authoritative control over all types of arms subject to destruction or limitation, over all stages of the projected reductions. Control including inspections at laboratories with the object of keeping outer space peaceful, free of strike weapons. The U.S.S.R. is prepared to negotiate other additional verification measures. And this despite the fact that the behaviour of some people in the West gives reason to suspect designs to abuse this procedure in pursuit of dubious ends.

Moscow is fully aware that the realization of the proposed programme will be attended by great difficulties. The obstacles are formidable. They include the military-industrial complexes in the NATO countries, which regard the civilian sector of the economy less profitable than the military; the politicians and brass hats for whom a world without weapons and wars is sheer fantasy, and the absurd, deep-seated, paranoiac concept of the U.S.S.R. as a ruthless, dyed-in the-wool enemy of "Western civilization." The obstacles are many, but the no longer distant danger of an all-incinerating nuclear war makes it imperative to clear away the accretions of a long-standing antagonism and distrust.

The Soviet Union, as its leadership has said, is ready on the issue of war

MESSAGE FROM WEST BERLIN

The following letter was sent to CPSU General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev by the Board of the Society of German-Soviet Friendship of West Berlin.

Dear Mr Gorbachev,

The successful completion of the meeting in Geneva between you and U.S. President Reagan has lessened the threat of nuclear catastrophe which haunted all of us like a terrible nightmare. The two biggest world powers have agreed that nuclear war must never be started inasmuch as it would jeopardize the very existence of mankind. Neither side should seek military superiority because only a balance of forces at an increasingly lower level can ensure the easing of tension and the preservation of peace. The negotiations between the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. on preventing the militarization of outer space and the reduction of strategic arms and medium-range weapons which began in Geneva on January 8, 1985, must be continued with all speed.

The results of the meeting convincingly confirmed the correctness of the Soviet initiatives aimed at the solution of the key question of international security—reducing the danger of war and achieving a radical turn for the better in the relations between the U.S.S.R. and the U.S. This is the way to safeguard world peace.

Now is the time for words to be followed by deeds.

We would like to express our deepest gratitude to the Soviet Party and government leadership and particularly you, Mikhail Sergeyevich, for your personal contribution to the holding of the meeting with U.S. President Reagan and to the results achieved at it. You forcefully and convincingly presented the case for humanism and expressed the desire of all peoples for peace.

The Society of German-Soviet Friendship of West Berlin functions at the junction of East and West which reacts sensitively to the slightest changes in the world. Thanks to the sincere and constructive peace policy of the Soviet Union, West Berlin has been able for one and a half decades now to work in conditions of political wisdom, mutual understanding and peace.

Despite the efforts of all kinds of ill-wishers, the members and friends of our organization constantly seek to acquaint the citizens of our city with Soviet policy, to convince them that good relations with the U.S.S.R. are beneficial for both sides. We give a rebuff to all anti-Soviet slander and attacks.

Our annual U.S.S.R. Days are a great success. The volume of mutual trade and tourism is steadily growing. The many exhibitions, showings of theatrical performances and films, the discussions of topical issues with our society taking part in them, keep people informed about the Soviet Union. With our support and in close cooperation with the Union of Soviet Societies of Friendship an art exhibition, entitled "The War Beats in Every Heart," was held in Minsk and West Berlin. It was a demonstration by Byelorussian and West Berlin artists of their joint will for peace.

We will continue to work actively in this direction, for peace—the greatest boon of mankind—is not yet assured. The U.S. military-industrial complex still persists in its plans for an arms buildup in outer space, deceiving public opinion by calling them "a defence initiative." The realization of these plans would inevitably lead to a new round in the arms race at a higher level. Moreover, gigantic resources would be senselessly wasted on armaments, while millions of people are dying of hunger every day in many parts of the world.

Therefore, we as part of the powerful movement of peace supporters declare:

Outer space must not be militarized!

By joint effort we must prevent the American SDI plans being materialized!

Peace must be ensured with fewer weapons, there must be general and complete disarmament!

With deep respect,

For the Board of the Society
of German-Soviet Friendship of West Berlin
Rolf ELIAS, Chairman

West Berlin, December 3, 1985

Mikhail Gorbachev expressed his grateful appreciation to the authors of the letter.

and peace to rise above all that divides it and the Western countries, including the United States. For the sake of preserving the supreme value—universal peace—to rise above its legitimate apprehensions as regards some aspects of American foreign policy, above the unjust accusations levelled against it, in a word, above all that is burdening the relations between the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A., between East and West.

This is not propaganda. It is not altruism. Neither is it pacifism, whose votaries expect peace to be handed to them on a platter one fine day. It is not weakness, as it might seem to some overweening apologists of postions-of-strength policies. Socialism has always been and will be able to stand up for itself should the need arise. It will also be able to develop any weapon if compelled to do so.

It is a matter of a heightened awareness of the need to put an end to military rivalry before it develops into something worse. It is a manifestation of a new political thinking which calls for crossing the Rubicon—from the mentality of "potential adversaries" inevitably bound to cross their nuclear swords, to a mentality of partnership in security, in the limitation, reduction and elimination of armaments.

What is Washington's reaction to the Soviet plan? This is what the world public, which is yearning for real progress towards a more secure world, is concerned about at present. That reaction is perhaps slightly more favourable than it has been in recent years; the summit in Geneva is evidently prompting restraint. Nevertheless, it is not exactly an encouraging reaction.

We shall study it, they say.... It has elements that might be constructive.... However, many elements have remained unchanged and give rise to serious concern....

Thus the White House. The far-reaching, bold and essentially new Soviet programme is presented as a sort of "Russian reply" to a "whole series of proposals" advanced by the United States.

The U.S. President recalled how, addressing the Japanese parliament in 1983, he called for the total elimination of nuclear weapons. And so he did, which is all to his credit. But what followed? Nothing positive. A contrary process, the process of accumulating and modernizing nuclear weapons continued on the other side of the ocean as if nothing had happened. It is noteworthy, too, that as distinct from the attitude to the Soviet project, hardly anyone took the President's call seriously. As a matter of fact, it was designed solely to impress his Japanese audience.

While talking about the "spirit of Geneva" and "a new start" in Soviet-American relations, the other side is in fact moving in a direction quite other than that jointly mapped out in Geneva.

In briefing his delegation on the eve of the fourth round of the Soviet-American talks on nuclear and space weapons, Ronald Reagan "edited" the jointly coordinated agenda in his own way by excluding from it the issue of preventing an arms race in space.

In the meantime, the President's favourite brainchild—the Strategic Defence Initiative—which has given mankind the headache of preventing "star wars" is steadily developing muscle, nuclear muscle included, despite all assurances of its non-nuclear origin. Laser systems are being developed for the "space shield," turning it into a sword. Referring to expert opinion, the Los Angeles Times warns that these systems may serve as offensive weapons and cause large-scale conflagrations capable of bringing on such ecological disasters as "nuclear winter."

And so, "nuclear winter".... It will be recalled that addressing the Soviet people the President wished them "a clear sky." The notorious Jeane Kirkpatrick, who always speaks her mind, takes a different view. Says the former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations: "We cannot negotiate 'chistoye nebo' [clear sky] with the Soviets: we must build more weapons and put them in space in order to overcome the frightening 'Russian advantage' on earth."

Let the "Russian advantage," which frightens Jeane Kirkpatrick, remain on her conscience. This bogey is obviously being used for the purpose of gaining military supremacy over the U.S.S.R. by means of SDI. This intention is no secret to many sober-minded Americans. The Massachusetts universities' association against nuclear war believes that by proclaiming its adherence to SDI, based on the development of various space strike weapon systems, the U.S. says No to any constructive negotiations aimed at ending the arms race. The "star wars" programme is the missing link in the American strategy of gaining nuclear superiority over the U.S.S.R. Its purpose is to enable the U.S. to deliver a first nuclear strike with impunity.

Another line of this strategy is to ensure military superiority in Europe, in the immediate vicinity to the Soviet borders, by means of first-strike nuclear weapons. At present new cruise missiles are being added to the 108 Pershing 2s already deployed on F.R.G. soil. At the same time those in Washington unashamedly claim that the negotiations on medium-range nuclear arms are the most promising avenue of progress at the Geneva talks. This is hardly surprising, however, in the light of the absurd "Arm first, disarm later," concept they proceed from.

While it is in fact a programme for achieving military superiority, SDI is still being publicized as the best way of making nuclear weapons "useless and obsolete."

In other words, Washington suggests that in order to achieve security and nuclear disarmament weapons should be orbited first and then brought back to earth whereupon nuclear weapons will, as if by magic, become useless. This is indeed a most ingenious way of ridding the world of nuclear arms. One cannot help but recall in this connection the high-ranking U.S. official who, at the end of the forties, tried to convince the inhabitants of the Bikini Atoll which has become a proving ground for atomic weapons that these weapons would bring mankind prosperity and peace and put an end to all war. What nuclear weapons have brought mankind over the forty years of the arms race is common knowledge. And now Washington is pushing SDI.

True, it is not claimed that the "star wars" programme holds out a promise of ridding mankind of wars and arms. Today's approach is different. To quote the Boston Globe: "Will there be arms control or 'star wars'? The SALT 2 and ABM treaties or an arms race?" This is the heart of the matter.

In his statement Mikhail Gorbachev offers a different way. Instead of wasting the next 10 to 15 years on the development of new and extremely dangerous space weapons, would it not make more sense to concentrate on the destruction of nuclear weapons and eventually get rid of them altogether? Such an approach is in keeping with any sober-minded person's idea of rationality, expediency, logic and common sense. The striking difference between the two approaches has not escaped the notice of the world public. "Ronald Reagan suggests that the threat posed by nuclear arms be removed by setting up a nuclear umbrella," the Paris Libération writes. "Mikhail Gorbachev, on the other hand, proposes a simpler and cheaper solution to the problem: total elimination of these weapons."

The Soviet Union has a detailed, thoroughly thought-out and well-balanced plan of universal and complete disarmament, and a strategy for safeguarding universal peace and international security. And what does Washington have to offer? According to the New York Times' Tom Wicker, "the Reagan Administration lacks a strong, clear direction in its arms control policy."

It prefers to follow another course—that of the unrestrained accumulation of armaments on earth and in outer space, and of seeking military superiority. Those in Washington are not in a hurry to break the habit of thinking only in terms of "power politics." The great art of living together, side by side with the other system, and of taking each other's interests into account comes hard to them. It remains beyond their grasp that the current global political and military-strategic situation offers the world no option other than peace and disarmament. They are still trying to "contain the Russians" by means of this or that "superweapon" instead of learning to contain themselves, as the veteran diplomat George Kennan advises them to do. His advice has fallen on deaf ears.

Their intention is "to dash rather than build a relationship based on mutual interest," political scientist Richard Barnet writes in the New York Times. "In Washington's view our Soviet adversary is to be managed by steadily increasing the threat we pose to it. Indeed, the Administration appears to deny that we have any interest in common with 'the evil empire.' The approach to negotiation has been grudging and the proposals so far safely non-negotiable." This statement hits the nail on the head. From this description of American policy towards the U.S.S.R. and many other countries, the writer draws the conclusion that Washington's chauvinism and hegemonism the "Rambo" style "has no place in a world of nuclear weapons and more than 160 countries."

It is a pity that the Administration has not yet reached such a conclusion and has not changed its views to suit the realities and requirements of the age. Transoceanic "Rambo" holds on to his nuclear big stick and is obsessed with getting hold of a space stick as well. It does not occur to him that he is not alone in the world or that strength has never served anyone as a substitute for reason. Unfortunately, there are no indications of Washington being prepared to put into practice its own much-publicized credo of rendering nuclear weapons "useless and obsolete." Rather the contrary is true.

The programme the U.S.S.R. has submitted to the world community urges an end to military confrontation and rivalry and a changeover to understanding and accord in matters of war and peace. In the history of various nations and of mankind as a whole there have been periods calling for the utmost exertion of spiritual and physical powers. We are going through one such period today when it is necessary to save the world from war. The Soviet Union suggests that all international affairs, relations and talks be planned, and the efforts of all nations coordinated and pooled in such a way as to break the vicious circle of war as we approach the start of the new century.

Mankind is not doomed to live on the brink of the nuclear abyss, under the Damoclean sword of space nuclear weapons. Man has created weapons, and man can destroy them. He must do so in order to remove the threat of self-destruction in a nuclear holocaust. ■

NEW FRAME OF MIND IN TOKYO

When two people engage in a dialogue they are both presumably equally interested in talking to each other and have something to talk about. If the dialogue is broken off the relations between the two come to a dead end and all manner of unforeseen consequences may ensue. The same applies to dialogue between states. The political dialogue between the Soviet Union and Japan, for example, has more than once in recent years reached an impasse when mutual understanding seemed altogether impossible. Only a few days before the official visit to Japan of Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze some Japanese newspapers voiced doubts about the possibility of a dialogue and cooperation between the two countries. Indeed, reading articles bristling with phrases like "Soviet aggressiveness," "the northern territories" and the "disadvantage of trade with the Soviet Union" it did at times seem that nothing could help the representatives of the two countries to begin talking in the language of mutual understanding.

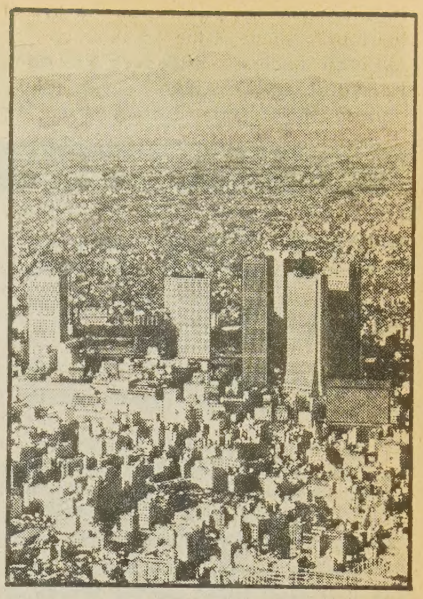
In the course of the few days from January 15 to 19 the tone of the Japanese media changed markedly. These were days of official negotiations between the Soviet Foreign Minister and his Japanese opposite number Shintaro Abe, talks with Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone, with leaders of the Socialist and Communist parties, receptions, meetings with the mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, getting acquainted, whenever time permitted, with the achievements of Japanese technology and culture. The tangible result of the work done was the signing of several documents: an agreement on trade and payments for 1986-90, a convention on exemption from double taxation, and also an exchange of documents on prolonging the operation of the letters exchanged on cultural contacts.

Of particular interest is the joint communiqué, the fruit of lengthy and heated discussion. After all, this document had to reflect not only the content of the first official talks at Foreign Minister level in eight years, but to chart the direction of the political dialogue and economic cooperation between the two countries for the future.

It is noteworthy that the communiqué begins with the confirmation by Prime Minister Nakasone of the invitation to CPSU General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev to pay an official visit to Japan, and the Soviet leader, in a personal message to the head of the Japanese government, tendered him an invitation to visit the Soviet Union. The exchange of invitations confirms the readiness of Tokyo and Moscow for substantive progress in bilateral relations and their desire to raise the political dialogue to a higher level. The dialogue itself is acquiring a new dimension—the Japanese Foreign Minister is to pay an official visit to the U.S.S.R. this year and next year his Soviet counterpart will pay a return visit to Japan. Also highly significant is the decision to continue the negotiations on the conclusion of a Soviet-Japanese peace treaty, the absence of which 40 years after the end of the war has been an obstacle to improvement of relations. The communiqué emphasizes the intention to promote the expansion of trade and economic ties on the basis of mutual benefit. Unfortunately, this intention, which would seem to be quite natural for two countries with mutually complementary economic structures was not backed up this time either by an official long-term agreement such as the Soviet Union has with some of the leading West European countries. The Japanese side is not yet ready to take such a step. However, it was decided to raise the level of the annual consultations on trade and economic questions and to resume, after a long interval, the sessions of the Soviet-Japanese commission on scientific and technological cooperation.

During their meeting with newsmen, the two ministers gave the highest appraisal of the documents signed. Highly important, too, were the ten hours Eduard Shevardnadze and Shintaro Abe spent discussing Mikhail Gorbachev's statement and some of the most burning global and regional issues.

The talks in Tokyo created an atmosphere of good will and trust which had been sadly lacking in the past few years. If this atmosphere is preserved and even improved in the coming weeks and months, the year 1986 might well go down in history as a year that saw a turning point in Japanese-Soviet relations. This is the goal Moscow is working for. Nakasone and other leaders of the government and ruling party have on more than one occasion latterly voiced a desire to seek a way out of the impasse in relations with the U.S.S.R. For the first time in the history of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party the draft of its programme of action includes a provision on the need to pay special attention to improving ties with the Soviet Union. This is urged also by the leaders of the opposition parties and the business world.



While fully conscious of Japan's place in the trade and economic structure of the world, Japanese political and business circles are now giving more thought also to diplomatic strategy for the end of the present and the beginning of the next century, looking for a worthy place for their country in the international arena. Clearly, Japan can aspire to a higher status only if stable relations with all the great powers, the Soviet Union included, are ensured.

As regards the economy, highly influential figures see in the development of cooperation with the neighbouring country a way out of the approaching crisis in trade with the United States and Western Europe. Symptomatic in this respect is the opinion of the President of the Japanese Centre for Economic Research Hisao Kanamori set forth in the latest issue of the journal Japanese Trade and Industry. Kanamori gives a high assessment of the economic development prospects of the U.S.S.R.; the emphasis placed on the priority development of Siberia and the Far East, he writes, opens qualitatively new opportunities for Soviet-Japanese cooperation.

In these past days we have grown accustomed to the word "dialogue." Let us hope that this word will become firmly established in the Tokyo political lexicon.

Y. TAVROVSKY
Our Own Correspondent
Tokyo

INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF PEACE

GIFT TO ALL PEACE-LOVERS

Over 300 distinguished scientists, artists, writers, actors, and public and religious figures from 50 countries, including the Soviet Union, gathered in mid-January in the vast hall of Warsaw's Victoria Hotel for the World Intellectual Congress for Peace. On behalf of millions of peace campaigners, the Congress called for the strengthening of international security and peace.

Poland has been the venue for such meetings on a number of previous occasions. The World Intellectual Congress for Peace held in war-ravaged Wroclaw in 1948 had an outstanding role to play in mobilizing world public opinion against the danger of a new world war, and enhancing the responsibility of scientists and artists for the future of the planet. The greatest humanists of our time, scientists Irène and Frédéric Joliot-Curie, writers Mikhail Sholokhov, Martin Andersen Nexö and Ilya Ehrenburg, poets Paul Eluard and Julian Tuwim, artists Renato Guttuso and Pablo Picasso—added their authoritative voices to the peace campaign. Picasso dedicated to the Congress his famous Paloma which has become a symbol of peace.

The recent Congress was distinguished by an especially elated atmosphere: a few hours before the opening ceremony participants learned of the statement by CPSU General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev voicing the Soviet Union's determination to do everything in its power to prevent a nuclear war and save world civilization. The new Soviet programme met with an enthusiastic response on the part of those gathered in Warsaw. Participants unanimously stated that millions of people in every corner of the globe expected the United States to take similar practical measures aimed at curbing the arms race and preventing war. "After years of dangerous confrontation," said the French writer and member of the Académie des Goncourt André Stil, "this initiative makes people confident that peace is possible."

The opening of the Congress coincided with another important event—the 41st anniversary of the liberation of

Warsaw from nazi occupation by Soviet and Polish troops. Delegates laid flowers at the foot of the famous Nike—the symbol of the revived Polish capital.

"Understanding and cooperation amongst scientists and artists can contribute substantially towards a better and, above all, a peaceful future," Perez de Cuellar, the U.N. Secretary-General, pointed out in his special message to the Warsaw Congress. The composer Tikhon Khrennikov, the head of the Soviet delegation, read out a message of greeting from Mikhail Gorbachev saying: "We are confident that mankind's intellectual potential must serve to augment material and spiritual wealth and not to create new deadly weapons of global destruction."

Participants at the Congress in Warsaw (on which the honorary title of a Peace City was conferred by the World Peace Council) saw their objective in defining their contribution to the cause of safeguarding a peaceful future. Over four days of intense creative work they expressed their views on such key issues connected with the development of modern civilization and the prevention of a nuclear holocaust as disarmament, protection of the environment, the preservation of mankind's cultural values and the main directions of the campaign for peace, and urged all-embracing international cooperation.

"The Warsaw Congress," Romesh Chandra, Secretary-General of the World Peace Council, stressed, "has opened the International Year of Peace. It is a good beginning. I cannot help mentioning such an outstanding event of these few days as the statement by Mikhail Gorbachev which has made a deep impression on the work of the Congress. I should say it is the finest gift to all who work for peace."

The Congress adopted an appeal to refrain from the use of force in international relations, end the arms race and eliminate atomic weapons before the century is out. May the International Year of Peace mark the beginning of the era of peace on earth, the appeal says.

V. GALIN

U.S.S.R.—FRANCE

A TRAIN NOT TO BE MISSED

Can Paris trade more with Moscow than it is doing at present? The 20th session of the Soviet-French Mixed Commission (Grande Commission), held in Moscow on January 16 and 17, has answered this question in the affirmative.

To all appearances, French businessmen proved to have been right in expecting the Mitterrand-Gorbachev meeting in Paris last October to give a strong impetus to trade and economic relations between the two countries. The 20th session of the Grande Commission provided graphic evidence of this. What concrete results do the French expect their business links with the U.S.S.R. to bring?

Maurice Mallet, director of the eastern department of Rhône-Poulenc, finds it easier to speak in terms of figures. The Soviet Union, he explained to Alexander Ignatov, a Novosti Press Agency correspondent, imports $4 billion worth of chemicals alone annually, and when a businessman with eyes in his head sees a train $4 billion long he naturally wants to board it. All the more so as the train running in the opposite direction—that of Soviet export trade—is also rather impressive-looking. If we are sufficiently realistic, he went on, we shall not miss that train. If we are not, the driver, the porter and the ticket clerk will have no trouble at all in finding other passengers.

The 20th session of the Grande Com-

mission has shown that business relations between Moscow and Paris are not always plain sailing. The French sometimes complain that the U.S.S.R. is too tough a partner to deal with. Nevertheless, Edith Cresson, head of the French delegation, noted with satisfaction that the two sides are determined to promote cooperation in the most diverse fields. For this reason they managed not only to deal with current problems but also to discuss long-term business prospects.

The results achieved to date speak for themselves. From 1980 to 1984, Soviet-French turnover more than doubled as compared with the previous five-year period and reached the 20 billion ruble mark. Soviet orders keep nearly 150,000 French people in jobs. These figures, though impressive, are by no means the ceiling. To quote businessman Maurice Mallet, "where there's a will there's a way." If we really want solutions to unavoidable problems, we shall find them, provided that we do away with the negative aspects of our relations and emphasize the positive ones.

The agreement on economic cooperation in the period between 1986 and 1990 signed in Paris last autumn gives considerable scope for joint efforts in this field. How this cooperation goes from here will now largely depend on the Grande Commission and the degree to which its decisions are put into effect.

L. MAKAREVICH

GUATEMALA

LIGHT AT THE TUNNEL'S END?

In Guatemala, the newly elected president Vinicio Cerezo has taken up his duties. The reason why special mention should be made of the new head of state having an electoral mandate is that for over 30 years the country has been ruled by a succession of reactionary military juntas.

Ever since U.S. intervention toppled President Jacobo Arbenz's progressive administration in 1954, the people of Guatemala have in effect been without a constitution. The electoral farces staged from time to time had the sole aim of hoodwinking world opinion by creating pretences of democracy and neutralizing American legislators opposed to the dictatorship whenever another dollar handout was being discussed in Congress.

The new President is encumbered by the grimmest of legacies. The country's former rulers were more concerned to brutally suppress political dissidence and fill the coffers of the local oligarchy they so faithfully served. More than 100,000 Guatemalans died at the hands of the military and the sinister death squads, while thousands more were thrown into the concentration camps officially termed "strategic" or "model villages"; inmates of the camps were peasants left without home and family after punitive raids.

The national economy is on its last legs. Only half its industrial capacity is operative. In effect, half the workforce is unemployed. Five million out of a population of eight million are virtually destitute.

Vinicio Cerezo, who ran for the bourgeois Christian Democratic Party, defeated his rival Jorge Carpio, favoured by the military, in the second round of voting. Judging by his initial pronouncements, the new head of state seeks to tackle acute political, social and economic questions, end army atrocities, and enter into dialogue with the patriotic forces.

Special significance attaches to the President's announcement that his administration desires a political settlement in Central America and will support the Contadora group's effort to have conflicts in the area resolved through negotiation between the parties concerned, rather than the use of armed force. The public has acclaimed the statement in which Central American presidents attending the inauguration ceremony emphasized that the explosive situation could be defused only through dialogue and negotiation, more specifically within the context of the Contadora group. News media noted Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega's declaration that the U.S. must end its divisive policy in Central America and back negotiation.

Time will show how things develop under Guatemala's new administration. Citizens hope that the club law of the secret police will end immediately, repressive legislation will be repealed, and all civil, political and trade union rights fully restored.

R. TUCHNIN

ALGERIA

CHARTER APPROVED

An outstanding event in the life of Algeria was the referendum held on January 16 in which 98.3 per cent of its participants approved the draft of the new text of the National Charter, the basic programme document of the Algerian revolution. The referendum was preceded by a discussion of the draft at an extraordinary congress of the National Liberation Front Party, which was attended by about 5,000 delegates. The congress introduced numerous amendments to the Charter and adopted the final text which was submitted to the referendum.

Speaking of the reasons for revising the Charter, Chadli Bendjedid, President of Algeria and General Secretary of the National Liberation Front, said that it was a matter of amending some provisions written into the Chart-

er in 1976 when it was adopted. "We must reaffirm the basic principles of the Algerian revolution and discuss some new questions which were not reflected in the National Charter," the Algerian leader said. Yesterday's possibilities, he continued, are not the same as today's and the progress achieved called for a greater exertion of efforts to cope with the difficulties caused by the world economic crisis, the drop in Algeria's oil earnings, and the perturbations on the world oil market. Algeria's plans for the future, he stressed, must be commensurate with its possibilities if it would avoid the difficulties facing many developing countries as a result of foreign pressure and interference which infringe their sovereignty.

The Charter confirms the socialist choice made by Algeria "as a consequence of the rejection by the people of the colonial domination and capitalist exploitation that deprived them of the right to a decent life." In this connection it was noted that the principle of the elimination of the exploitation of man by man was being effected through the socialization of the means of production and the establishment of a public sector which is to become the "basic groundwork for the building of socialism."

A noteworthy feature of the new text of the Charter is the emphasis laid on enhancing the role of private capital in the country's economy. "The private sector," the document says, "has the right to exist in a framework in which private property does not harm the working masses and does not retard the advance to socialism." Organization of the economy is based mainly on planning, and the monopoly of foreign trade. As regards industry, the planned development of all branches is envisaged, with encouragement given to small and medium industrial enterprises. The document devotes much space to substantiating the important role of Islam in the life of Algeria as the "state religion" and notes that it was the principles of Islam that "inspired Algeria to choose socialism."

The section dealing with foreign policy states that Algeria stands for peaceful coexistence of states and non-interference, seeks friendly relations with all nations, and is dedicated to the struggle of the peoples of the developing countries against imperialism, colonialism, neocolonialism, Zionism and racism. As regards relations with the socialist countries, the Charter records the desire to develop and broaden economic, scientific and technological cooperation, since "the possibilities in this sphere have not been exhausted."

Such in general outline is the gist of the document which will determine the direction of Algerian policy in the coming years.

E. BOBROV
Our Own Correspondent
Algiers, January

ORGANIZATION OF THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE

WASHINGTON CONDEMNED

The foreign ministers of the states belonging to the Organization of the Islamic Conference held their 16th meeting in Fez, Morocco, early last month. Now that Nigeria has been admitted to membership this international intergovernmental organization integrates, on the basis of religious identity, 46 Afro-Asian Moslem states plus the Palestine Liberation Organization. With so many differences in state and socio-economic structures and foreign policy orientation, Conference activity reveals both anti-imperialist attitudes and conservative tendencies on a range of international and regional issues.

However, the Fez meeting showed that on the whole the Conference adheres to an anti-imperialist line on many issues, which point was reflected in the agenda. Attention was concentrated for the most part on a Middle East settlement, support for the righteous struggle of the Arab people of Palestine, U.S. blackmail of Libya, the war between Iran and Iraq, and Israel's desire to extend its influence in Africa.

It was unanimously agreed that the crucial problem for Islam and Moslems today is the tragedy of the Palestinians, whom the Zionists have deprived of their homeland. The forum emphasized that the Middle East crisis could be resolved only in the event of a fair settlement of the Palestinian question that would incorporate the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and the creation of its own independent state with its capital in Jerusalem. In its final communiqué the meeting emphasized adherence to the U.N. General Assembly resolution calling for an international Middle East peace conference, in which all the parties concerned would be represented, including the PLO as the only legitimate representative of the Palestinian Arabs, and also the U.S.S.R., the U.S. and other permanent U.N. Security Council members. The overwhelming majority condemned the anti-Arab substance of the U.S.-Israeli alliance and Washington's military, financial, economic and other help to the Israeli aggressors. More specifically, stigmatized was the raid on the PLO headquarters in Tunis which Israel carried out with direct U.S. connivance.

The final communiqué also denounced the outrages and reprisals perpetrated by the Israeli occupiers in the captured Arab territories, the desecration by the Zionist authorities of the Moslem shrine of the Al Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, the brigandage of the Israeli aggressors in southern Lebanon, and the intensified building of paramilitary Israeli settlements in traditionally Palestinian and Syrian territory.

The foreign ministers of the Islamic Conference opposed U.S. threats and military preparations vis-à-vis Libya. Their unanimously adopted communiqué condemns the U.S. Administration's actions against Libya which conflict with the universally accepted norms of international law. This condemnation is noteworthy, as it was voiced despite U.S. President Reagan's message to the General Secretary of the Islamic Conference asking for understanding and support of U.S. sanctions.

However, the Fez meeting considers the anti-Libyan threats of U.S. imperialism and Zionism spearheaded against all Moslem countries. Emphasizing the unlawful character of the U.S. economic sanctions and demanding that they be revoked, the foreign ministers urged the Islamic world to "take the measures necessary to counter arbitrary U.S. action." Dr Ali Abdel-Salem Treiki, Secretary for Foreign Liaison of Libya's General's People's Committee, praised Soviet support for the Arab peoples' struggle for their rights. In a TASS interview he said: "We thank the friendly Soviet Union, which is on our side, and note its consistent repulsion of the intrigues of imperialism and Zionism."

As no resolution on the armed conflict between Iran and Iraq was forthcoming, the Islamic Conference Conciliation Committee was authorized to proceed with its efforts to secure a peaceful settlement in the Persian Gulf zone.

Now as previously, the Islamic Conference foreign ministers supported the fight of the peoples of Southern Africa and Namibia for national deliverance from colonialism and racial discrimination. They sharply censured such African states as the Ivory Coast for re-establishing diplomatic relations with Israel at a time when the latter was pursuing a policy of aggression and expansionism vis-à-vis the Arab states and peoples. This was qualified as detrimental to Arab-African cooperation.

Again, it was not the first time that the imperialists had been disappointed in their hopes that through representatives of associated regimes they would be able to highlight the so-called "Afghan issue." The Moslem foreign ministers preferred to note not illusory but tangible threats to the Islamic world emanating from U.S.-Israeli "strategic cooperation." Nor were the attempts by the emissaries of the Afghan dushmans to oust Afghanistan from its legitimate seat in the Islamic Conference successful.

The foreign ministers expressed anxiety at the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. In this connection they branded Israel's nuclear designs and its cooperation with South Africa in the manufacture of nuclear weapons. Their call to denuclearize Africa, the Middle East and South Asia should be qualified as an expression of the serious responsibility felt for the future of the world as a whole and not just the Islamic world. The Soviet public is convinced that so representative an organization as the Islamic Conference can signally contribute to the programme to deliver humanity from the nuclear menace which Soviet Communist Party General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev put forward recently.

O. FOMIN

DENMARK—EEC

AGAINST DIKTAT

A recent public opinion survey taken in Denmark showed that 55 per cent of those polled are opposed to Danish membership of the Common Market. This negative attitude to the EEC is in no small measure due to the plans to turn the Common Market into a "European Union," a closed political grouping with supranational functions.

The least acceptable for the Danes of the plans advanced by a number of leading EEC countries is the proposal to extend the jurisdiction of the European Parliament by giving it legislative powers. This would substantially restrict the jurisdiction of the national parliaments, including the Danish Folketing.

Demonstrating at a Danish factory in support of protection of the environment. The poster reads: "Dioxin, no thanks!"

TASS photo

In an effort to counter these tendencies in the EEC the Danes have advanced their own project proposing to extend the jurisdiction of the EEC to new areas of cooperation such as the environment, energy and the like. Denmark is at present being pressured by many of its EEC partners to agree to the introduction of uniform standards in the sphere of environmental protection and working conditions at industrial enterprises. The Danes fear that the adoption of such standards, which would be below those now in force in their country, will have an adverse effect on the Danish environment and, in the industrial sphere, give rise to conflicts with the trade unions.

Economic diktat is bad enough, but political diktat is much worse. This is repeatedly stressed by representatives of the People's Movement for the Withdrawal of Denmark from EEC. The efforts of some Common Market countries to unify the shaping of the foreign policy of community members is strongly resented by most political forces in Denmark. This move, the local press emphasizes, would in effect reduce to nil Denmark's cooperation with North European countries on a number of international problems, which is one of the cornerstones of Danish foreign policy.

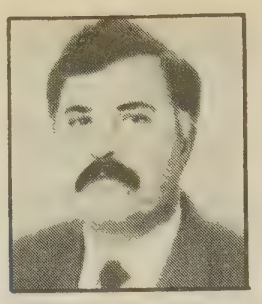
The Danes wanted the draft of the agreement on cooperation in foreign policy, drawn up by the EEC countries, to stipulate Denmark's right to cooperate in various fields with Sweden, Norway, Iceland and Finland. Copenhagen moreover insisted that EEC foreign policy cooperation should be open to other countries as well. Norway, for instance, evinced an interest in this. Several EEC countries, however, were against it.

The opponents of Denmark's participation in the EEC censure the intention of the Poul Schlüter cabinet to turn the community into a political "European Union." The government's position is also sharply criticized by the opposition parties in the Folketing. The government is parrying the attacks of the opposition while at the same time trying to mollify public opinion by professing to be against a "European Union," in proof of which it advances the "argument" that in the draft of the joint European act which is to inaugurate the Union it has succeeded in getting the word "union" changed in the Danish text to "association." Seeking to secure support for his plans, Poul Schlüter announced his intention to put the proposed EEC reforms to a referendum if the Folketing rejects them and the other EEC states accept them.

The People's Movement for the Withdrawal of Denmark from EEC calls upon the working people to take action to prevent the establishment of a "European Union" on the EEC groundwork. It estimates that no more than 10 per cent of the Danish population support the transformation of the EEC into a political union.

I. ROMANOV

THE PAKISTANI PASHTOONS ARE OUR BROTHERS



Dr HABIB MANGAL
Ambassador of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan to the U.S.S.R.

Early in December the troops of the Haq regime invaded the territory inhabited by the Pashtoon tribes of the Afridis and Shinwaris near the Khyber Pass, the North-West Frontier Province of Pakistan, and in effect occupied it, riding roughshod over the local population.

The Pashtoon tribes are a courageous and freedom-loving people. Their homeland extends over a vast area stretching from the spurs of the Hindu Kush in the north, along the Spin Ghar and the Sulaiman Range, as far as Beluchistan in the southwest.

Britain, which pursued an imperial colonial policy, attached strategic importance to the region as it sought to keep India under its dominion and secure conditions that allowed it to interfere in the internal affairs of the neighbouring Afghanistan. In 1893 Britain imposed an agreement on Afghanistan whereby a frontier was established along what was known thereafter as the Durand Line. As a result, the territories inhabited by Pashtoons and Beluchis were divided.

Along with the people of Afghanistan, the Pashtoons and Beluchis opposed this act of British imperialism and fought for freedom and the right to self-determination. Finally, Britain—and later Pakistan—were compelled to recognize the virtual autonomy of the Pashtoons and their territory came to be known as the "tribal area." The tribes, which historically and culturally have much in common with the people of Afghanistan, follow the same traditions, speak the same language, profess the same religion and maintain economic relations with us, and have always shown their solidarity with independent Afghanistan.

Islamabad has now decided to impose its will on the free and fearless Pashtoons, to try to subjugate them by force of arms. Large units of the Pakistani regular army, complete with heavy artillery, armoured personnel carriers and tanks, have been committed to action against them. Soldiers are killing innocent men and women, old people and children and pulling down their homes. Pakistani planes are carrying out destructive bombing raids on peaceful villages.

The Pakistani authorities shamelessly attempt to vindicate their armed action against the Afridis and Shinwaris as a measure against drug trafficking.

The real reason for Islamabad's military incursions into the tribal areas is that the Pashtoons and Beluchis, and primarily the Afridis and Shinwaris, support the April Revolution in Afghanistan and do not want their territory to be used in the undeclared war against the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, against the Afghan people. This war is being directed and financed by the U.S. with every cooperation from the Pakistani authorities and is being waged by Afghan counterrevolutionary bands.

The Pashtoons living on the Pakistani side of the border openly reaffirmed their support for revolutionary, democratic Afghanistan at the Great Jirgah of frontier tribes held in Kabul in September 1985. Along with 2,500 representatives of the tribes and peoples of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, this traditional assembly was attended by 1,200 envoys from the Pashtoon and Beluchi tribes, both settled and nomadic, living on the other side of the border (the Afridis and Shinwaris included). Amongst the delegates were tribal chiefs and elders, clergymen and commanders of tribal armed formations.

The Great Jirgah voiced full support for the home and foreign policies of the People's Democratic Party and the government of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan and approval of the progressive socio-economic and cultural reforms now being implemented with a view to building a developed and democratic society. They said they were determined to defend their home lands and prevent counterrevolutionary bands, saboteurs and arms caravans from crossing into Afghanistan through them. The consensus reached at the Jirgah was expressed in the slogan, "The Haq military regime and its imperialist masters, hands off revolutionary Afghanistan!"

With increasing effectiveness, arms in hand the cattle-breeding and land-tilling Pashtoon tribes living on the Pakistani side of the border prevented the counterrevolutionaries from penetrating into the D.R.A., and blocked the passes, especially the Khyber. They also demanded the evacuation from their territory of the numerous bases where American and Pakistani instructors train saboteurs and terrorists to be smuggled into Afghanistan.

This is why the dictatorial regime in Islamabad—with Washington's connivance and, probably, at Washington's instigation—marched its regular troops armed with modern American weapons into the Pashtoon tribal areas.

However, the Pakistani troops have met with heroic resistance on the part of the courageous Afridis and Shinwaris, backed up by other Pashtoon tribal groups. The intruders are sustaining considerable losses in manpower and resources. The Afridis have declared: "We Afridis will not allow the mercenaries of American imperialism, Pakistani usurpers and Afghan counterrevolutionary bands to tread on our soil!"

In Pakistan itself, democratic forces and organizations have launched a solidarity campaign with the Afridi and Shinwari tribes and this is attracting growing support. In cities throughout Pakistan the public is insistently calling for an end to the brutal aggression. Other Pashtoon tribes hold jirgahs which demand that Zia ul-Haq immediately withdraw his troops from the tribal areas and stop encroachments on their traditional autonomy.

The Pashtoons of Pakistan have the support of my country, democratic Afghanistan, in which the April Revolution has triumphed and political power has been taken by the people led by the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan. This Party is in complete solidarity with Pashtoon and Beluchi aspirations for national liberation.

There is no doubt that the aggression the Pakistani generals have unleashed against the freedom-loving tribes, our brothers, will backfire. ■

From the Persian Gulf to the shores of Libya, U.S. state terrorism threatens.

A THREAT NOT ONLY TO THE ARABS— THAT'S CLEARLY TO BE SEEN FROM DAMASCUS

DMITRY VOLSKY and PAVEL DAVYDOV

The tenor of life in the Syrian capital today is intense but confident. It has its own count of time going back to hoary antiquity, when it was the site of one of the early settlements to which modern civilization traces its origins. Monuments to its long history are inscriptions in Ugaritic, well-nigh the earliest language on record, Roman statues, Byzantine frescoes, and original manuscripts of the Koran. The city has gone through many transformations, time and again it was destroyed, but nevertheless it grew from century to century and now is growing from year to year. Around the historical centre—the Arab market with its innumerable shops and noisy throngs, the districts of luxurious villas and the neighbourhoods of the working folk, the hotels and government offices—lie the modern residential sections which have been springing up one after another in recent years, the multistorey buildings, and the wide avenues that differ from those of Moscow or Berlin only by virtue of their mosques with towering minarets.

Heights Bristling with Arms

Passing through one such avenue, we drove out of the city southwards in the direction of the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights. In half an hour or so we were stopped at a military checkpoint. Soon after this we came to a second Syrian post. About a hundred metres from here was the temporary but neat and solidly built structure of a U.N. special force outpost, and another 100 metres away, an Israeli post flying the Star of David flag. Next to it soldiers were unloading crates from a greyish-green truck—this time, true, not weapons but beer or Coca Cola, judging by the clinking of bottles that reached us in the clear morning air.

A small truck drew up also at the Syrian post. Not camouflage-coloured, but painted bright blue and white, evidently so that it should stand out against the background of the prickly brush and the stony terrain all around. It bore the licence plate of the Finnish battalion of the U.N. force. A tall, fair-haired soldier jumped down and exchanged friendly greetings with the officer in command of the Syrian post.

"We have excellent relations with our colleagues from the United Nations force," the Syrian officer told us. "I don't think the Israelis could say the same. Polish soldiers of the U.N. contingent are not allowed on the territory they occupy. True, the Polish and Canadian battalions are considered auxiliaries, the military functions being performed by the battalions from neutral Austria and Finland.

"So far things are quiet here, but the silence could be shattered at any moment," he continued, pointing to the low hills in the distance, where one could see with the naked eye some sort of metal poles, observation towers and other structures reminiscent of props for a film about flying saucers. These of course were not stage props, but items with far more practical and dangerous implications—the visible part of the military iceberg into which the Israelis have turned the Golan Heights they seized in 1967. Basing themselves on this springboard, they are keeping Syria not only under constant electronic surveillance, but also under threat of invasion. At the Golan bridgehead and around it they have concentrated large armed forces, including motorized infantry and tanks. And it is less than an hour's drive from here to Damascus.

Needless to say, the Israelis know that the Syrian capital would not be so easy to reach. Recall what happened at the time of the October 1973 war, after which they had to give back part of the occupied territory and agree to the stationing of the U.N. force at the new cease-fire lines. Since then Syria has built up its defences, including its air defence, which Israel could see for itself soon after it invaded Lebanon in 1982. It is not by chance that any movement of Syrian defensive surface-to-air missiles invariably evokes a hysterical reaction in Tel Aviv.

Another eruption of such hysteria occurred on the eve of the New Year and has not abated since. This is clearly not a spontaneous but a guided reaction. For it is hard to imagine that the provocative demand of the Israeli command that it be given a free hand for reconnaissance—and not only reconnaissance—flights over Lebanon coincided by chance with Israel's stepped-up efforts to prevent the civil war from being stopped there and to provoke more internal clashes in that country. Still less likely is it that the campaign of threats mounted against Syria is not connected with what happened before this campaign was unleashed. And what happened before was that the Israeli air force rehearsed bombing the Mediterranean coast. Tel Aviv sought to hush up this rehearsal, but for the Damascus news media it was no secret.

Who the Next Target?

It is particularly noteworthy that the rehearsals of air strikes at coastal targets in the Mediterranean were not only simulated exercises. There was also a real strike—the bombing last autumn of PLO institutions in Tunis, in which scores of Palestinians and

Tunisians died. This savage air raid was the bloodiest of the terrorist acts that rocked the Middle East and the Mediterranean in general towards the end of 1985 and then spilled over to Western Europe. But these were only separate links in a chain of terrorism. Terrorism all the more dangerous when it is state-sponsored. Not only Israel, but also the United States proposes to resort to it. The exhortations to "penalize" the countries Washington accuses of "shielding terrorists" make this plain. So far the list of such countries is topped by Libya. The U.S. has already imposed economic sanctions on it and advised all American nationals living there to leave at once. The signs are, however, that the sanctions are not the end of it. Let the Americans leave Libya and the U.S. will have a free hand to take military action. It is hardly by chance that mid-January saw dozens of Sixth Fleet warships, two carrier task forces, one transferred from as far away as the Indian Ocean, dispatched to Libyan coastal waters.

But this war machine could be turned in another direction, for instance, to the Persian Gulf, where a squadron was sent this month supposedly to "protect" American merchant shipping. Or in the direction of Syria and Lebanon in a long since endorsed move. As far back as 1967 before the Israeli attack on Arab countries, the U.S. aircraft carriers America and Saratoga appeared in the Eastern Mediterranean. Now the Saratoga is back there. This is symbolic indeed. The idea behind this "repetition of the past" was revealed by the U.S. newsmen Jack Anderson and Dale van Atta, both with connections in U.S. special services, in the January 10 issue of Washington Post when they described the Bekaa Valley in Lebanon, separated from Syria only by some ranges of hills, as a "tempting target." Syrian contingents of the inter-Arab force invited by the Lebanese government have been stationed in this strategic valley for some years now. To believe the two above-mentioned journalists, this is "a viper's nest ripe for destruction." Meanwhile the imposition on Syria of the same kind of economic sanctions as were imposed on Libya is being considered, according to the head of the counterterrorism office of the U.S. State Department. True, he admits that there is no direct proof of Syria's guilt. As if there were any such proof against Libya! But in Washington's view the facts do not count. It is easier for the State Department to tack the "shielding terrorists" accusation on anyone than for the Pentagon to change the sailing orders of carrier task forces. At any rate, no expenditure of costly fuel is involved.

Under all circumstances there can be little doubt that the eruptions of terrorism are directly connected with war preparations against Libya, Syria and other Arab countries. That they are used as an excuse for such preparations. More, what is in question is another attempt to discredit not only the Palestine Resistance, but all the Arab liberation forces, even the Moslem world as a whole, in the eyes of the American and West European public. The object is to sow fear and enmity. Things have gone so far that even well-intentioned Western tourists with a weakness for the exotic are liable to suspect every dark-skinned, black-haired young man wearing jeans of being about to throw a grenade. In Damascus hotels one hardly sees Western tourists. And those who do come find themselves to their surprise not in some "terrorist preserve" but in a hospitable country among friendly people. The hotel owners, however, are compensated for the drop in the number of Western tourists by Iranian pilgrims—simply, even shabbily-dressed bearded men, women shrouded in black veils who come to pay homage to the remains of Zeinab, the daughter of the Prophet Ali, which lie in one of the mosques of Damascus.

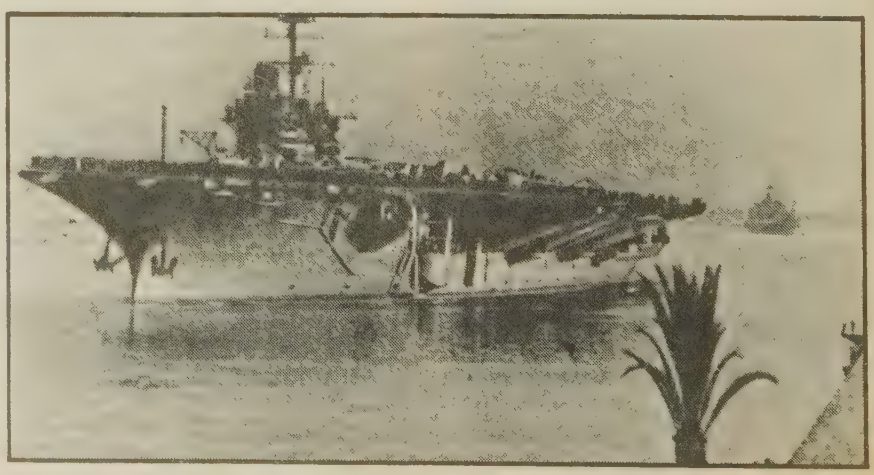
The long years of trampling on the national rights of the Palestinians and other Arabs, the annexation by Israel of Eastern Jerusalem which is sacred to all Moslems, and lastly, neocolonialism and the economic difficulties experienced by many Islamic countries—all this creates an explosive situation, an atmosphere of tension. It also creates favourable conditions for the utilization of this situation by forces bent on aggravating tension in the Middle East. According to an American TV commentator, "intelligence sources" say that terrorists involved in suicidal attacks often do not know whom they are really working for. Can there be any doubt that this plays into the hands of the CIA and Israel's Mossad?

What explanation is there for the following curious happening, for instance? The U.S. State Department lodged a protest against the lawful defensive measures taken by Libya, described the regime in that country as "irresponsible," voiced "concern" over its relations with the socialist countries and, lastly, refused to answer when asked whether the U.S. was planning armed action against Libya. When do you think this exercise in provocation took place? Not after the terrorist acts in Rome and Vienna with complicity in which Libya is being charged and for which it is presumably to be "punished." No, all this was said four days earlier, on December 23, by State Department spokesman Charles Redman at his last press conference before the Christmas holidays. Perhaps he was in too great a hurry to get to his Christmas turkey to display caution. Indeed there was no need for caution. After all, plans for the overthrow of Qaddafi by force were reported in the U.S. press not just days and weeks, but months and years before the present events.

There are also plans for destabilizing the anti-imperialist regime in Syria. One of them was made public early this month by the notorious Heritage Foundation, which feeds ideas to the Reagan Administration. The document is truly unprecedented. "Because Washington," it says, "has few carrots it can extend to Assad's Syria it must rely on sticks." But what kind of sticks if, as the Heritage Foundation report concedes, Syria is reliably protected against external threats? On the one hand, "furnishing aid to Assad's internal opposition" and "encouraging the emergence of a Syrian leadership" acceptable to the U.S., that is, preparing for a coup. On the other hand, "falling back on tricks," the biggest trick being the threat of a military confrontation, with terrorism and the situation in Lebanon as pretexts. To this

The U.S. aircraft carrier Saratoga was dispatched to the Mediterranean. It was there in June 1967 as well.

AP-TASS photo



end the U.S. should make available to Israel information on Syrian troop movements obtained by means of spy satellites, and to "reserve the right [!] to retaliate against Syrian targets in reprisal."

There hardly is any point in moralizing on such revelations. The important thing is to underscore that all this clearly shows that the present preparations for imperialist aggression in the Mediterranean and the aggravation of tension in the Middle East are no surprise development, not merely countermoves, but a preplanned large-scale military and political operation. And it is targeted on more than one country, indeed on all the anti-imperialist forces in the Arab world. Let us not conjecture as to whether Washington will venture to land its Marines in Libya, whether the U.S. or Israel will bomb Syrian targets, or whether this time they will choose some other methods and targets. But why should there be recourse to risky actions fraught with consequences difficult to control? As recently as last summer Washington politicians went out of their way to talk about "peace in the Middle East" and advanced diverse variants of separate deals, pressed for the continuation of the Camp David process, and sought to reanimate the Middle East "Reagan plan." Everything was done to force the Arabs to capitulate: recall, for instance, the agreement concluded less than a year ago in Amman between King Hussein of Jordan and Yasser Arafat. How much noise was made over that! This, it was contended, was a "step towards peace." Even now U.S. politicians continue, as if by inertia, to talk at times about a "peace process" to which they supposedly want to give impetus in the Middle East. But at the same time they are reaching for their weapons together with Israel. And on what scale! What is the political logic behind this at first glance unexpected turn?

From Failures to New Gambles

Geebran Kuria, adviser to President Hafez Assad, received us late in the evening, long after office hours. The lift was no longer operating and we had to climb up six floors to his office. The room with its abundance of books, journals and manuscripts was more like the study of a writer or a scientist. The news was being broadcast on TV.

"How does Damascus view the causes and the substance of the present events?" the presidential adviser repeated our question. "In our opinion the large-scale offensive mounted in recent years by imperialism and Zionism has resulted in their positions in the Middle East being weakened, not strengthened. That offensive did not achieve its objectives. Its culmination was Camp David, but that design too did not place our region under U.S. control as had been expected. On the contrary, those Arabs who pinned their hopes on the so-called 'American option' found themselves isolated, figuratively speaking beleaguered. Now they do not venture to speak publicly of that 'option,' for it is clear that in practical terms it signifies nothing but ignominy and more and more concessions. But Syria, which takes an anti-imperialist stand, could not be isolated in the Arab world. More, affinity with Syria is now something of a 'warrant' of national dignity enabling one or another Arab politician to save face."

Many of those we met in Damascus recalled how the U.S.-backed Israeli invasion of Lebanon led to Tel Aviv's political and military defeat. The U.S. and NATO had to get out of Lebanon, and then the Israeli army too pulled out of a sizable part of the territory it had occupied in that country—not of its own free will, but under pressure from the guerrillas. The May 17, 1983, agreement forced on Lebanon by Tel Aviv and Washington which made the country their protectorate was annulled.

Whatever may still happen, it is clear that the attempts to involve Lebanon in the defeatist Camp David process failed. Nor was it possible to involve more participants in it by means of the Amman agreement between King Hussein and Yasser Arafat. Now that agreement, though not formally annulled, is in effect inoperative. "A flop" is how it was described by Mr Khair al-Wadi, the editor-in-chief of one of the leading Damascus newspapers, Al Thawrah.

"If after the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982," he said, "defeatist sentiment spread in the Arab world and then the Amman agreement caused confusion, now the mood is different." He recalled also King Hussein's recent visit to Damascus. Closer relations between Jordan and Syria, he said, help to release Jordan from the U.S. embraces. At the same time the liberation struggle is on the upgrade in the territories occupied in 1967, and primarily in the West Bank, where the centre of the Palestine Resistance has now shifted. The Israelis report only some of the combat operations conducted there by the Palestinians. And no wonder, considering the crisis in Israel itself.

All this not only alarms Washington. It prompts it to go over from "soft" tactics to using its armoured fist against virtually all Arab peoples, and this presents a threat to the security of the Mediterranean area as a whole. This explains why Youssef Faisal, Assistant General Secretary of the Syrian Communist Party, placed so much emphasis on solidarity with Libya in the interview he granted us.

"The clamour is against Libya," he said, "but a strike could be delivered also at Syria, through the Lebanese 'door,' for instance. Why? To undermine Syria's influence and prestige in the Middle East."

"Threats against Libya are part of a wider imperialist design," Ahmed Dearham, member of the regional leadership of the ruling Baath Party, said. "We could also be made the target. For one thing because the U.S. and Israel fear that efforts towards peace in Lebanon could lay the groundwork for the creation of an anti-imperialist front in the Eastern Mediterranean. They are also disquieted by the possibility of the Iranian-Iraqi war being brought to an end. Speaking of the Persian Gulf, mention should be made of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the U.S.S.R. and Oman. This is a good thing, although everybody knows what the sultanate's orientation is. We look at it thus: if in ancient times all roads led to Rome, today they lead to Moscow. This is our stand. Solidarity in the fight for peace, which for us is linked with the fight against Israeli aggression and expansion, is of the greatest importance."

The latest events have indeed underscored this organic interconnection. Having come up against a series of failures in its Middle East policy, Washington clearly has decided to try to change the natural course of events by means of risky strong-arm methods. It would hardly venture to do this were it not for the qualitative evolution in recent years of U.S.-Israeli strategic partnership, from the provision by Israel of port facilities for Sixth Fleet ships as well as arms stores for the U.S. Rapid Deployment Force to consent to join in the "star wars" setup. Tel Aviv hastened to announce this ahead of all other U.S. allies. Mention must also be made of the unprecedented economic agreement which makes Israel economically nothing short of the 51st state of the United States with all the political and military consequences ensuing from this. In these circumstances the emphasis placed by Washington and Tel Aviv on armed force becomes doubly dangerous, for the aggressive ambitions of the one are multiplied, as it were, by those of the other. This presents a threat above all to the Mediterranean and the Middle East, that cradle of human civilization, the civilization everyone is in duty bound to safeguard. ■

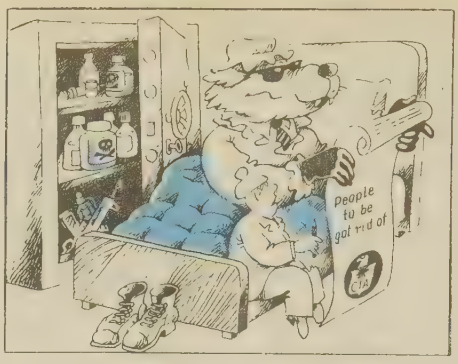
ANOTHER LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD?

The old story about Little Red Riding Hood and the Big Bad Wolf is as popular in the U.S. as it is everywhere else. As you will remember, the gullible little girl calls on her kindly Granny and naively asks the old lady, who is really the Big Bad Wolf in disguise, why she has such a large mouth and teeth and he keeps fobbing her off.

Something of the sort happened in Washington in the 1970s, with a U.S. Congressional committee and the CIA cast as Little Red Riding Hood and the Big Bad Wolf respectively. The Congressmen to be sure well knew they were dealing with professional hitmen and their conversations with CIA chiefs bore no taint of romanticism or naiveté. What they wanted to know was whether it was true that the CIA had devised a subtle means of "eliminating" foreign heads of state and government who had incurred Washington's displeasure. They established that the CIA hit-list contained the names of many eminent fighters against imperialism and colonialism and that the techniques it planned to employ to eliminate them were cynically brutal. However, we now learn that the Congressmen were privy to only a modicum of the truth, Miles Copeland, former CIA political action chief, declared in a Rolling Stone interview. He contended that at one time political assassination had been seen as a sound alternative to war. He said that according to directives straight from the White House he had personally explored possibilities of killing Nasser and that, in the course of a meeting, he had investigated the feasibility of lacing his coffee with cyanide. He admitted that a CIA agent had once doctored the lotion used by Sukarno with a "special psychotropic" substance. Copeland also described how the CIA can now murder by means of poisoned letters, provoke lethal allergies to practically anything from aspirin to tea and coffee, and has a whole range of methods at its disposal for causing "natural death."

Unlike the story of Little Red Riding Hood there is no happy ending. The Big Bad Wolf is still at it while playing Granny and telling all and sundry that he is fighting the evil of "international terrorism."

E. KORSHUNOV



"Why is your list so long, Granny..."

Cartoon by N. Shcherbakov

FUTILE HANDOUTS

The American magazine Newsweek wondered tongue-in-cheek whether, if Administration was backing the Afghan revolutionaries, they shouldn't also e helping hand to Khmer émigrés in T The more so, as, according to the source, the CIA has already shipped v to mercenary units raiding Kampuchea week's pretence of ignorance about a Khmer émigrés, however, would seem futile: such aid is already being furni an increasing scale and, according Washington Post, the U.S. plans shortly

FREEDOM, DEM

"Only Nicaraguans can be the sentinels of their own liberty." This quotation, impeccable from the point of view of political morality, comes from Elliot Abrams, Assistant U.S. Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs. Such pronouncements are to be found in practically every paragraph of an article he contributed to the New York under "wish ple f dom,

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Photo

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GOING, GOING...

In the struggle for survival two U.S. news kitchens—Associated Press and United Press International—emerged unscathed. Each put its best foot forward in the drive for efficiency and professionalism and, as a result, they were now as alike as two peas in a pod. At first glance, that was.

However, informed people knew where the similarities ended. AP was bigger and richer and eventually UPI faced up to Hamlet's dilemma "to be or not to be," as a result of which just over three years ago E.W. Scripps sold the agency to Douglas Ruhe and William Geissler.

The new proprietors optimistically told 500 American publishers that UPI would provide not only news but also profits. Alas, it is still in the red and, according to mid-January information, is up for sale again. In fact, it is now in Chancery, and it remains for the law courts to decide who is to own this source of "free information" for the news media of the "free world." A tentative decision has been made whereby UPI will be shared between Mexican press baron Mario Vasquez Raña and Texan multimillionaire Joseph Russo. Though the Mexican will own 90 per cent of the shares and is ready to take over, a third claimant has come forward in the shape of a consortium headed by the Financial News Network. However, the Mexican press baron is the favourite, as he has even promised to make good UPI's debts to minor creditors and to personnel, whom he is to acquire with the agency. The 1,622 members of the foreign staff are to be thrown in with the deal, along with all their rights and freedoms.

M. FROLOV

the Khmer reactionaries $3.5 million, and openly at that.

Evidently Washington thinks the Khmer terrorists need increasingly tangible support. Indeed, they seem incapable of recovering from the crushing defeat the People's Revolutionary Army of Kampuchea inflicted on them during the previous dry season. Internecine strife is adding to their difficulties. However, Washington seeks to strengthen the "coalition" with dollar handouts in the hope of weakening people's Kampuchea and obstructing its efforts for peaceful construction. But, as a Khmer proverb has it, water that runs down the mountain cannot be turned back. Nor can the history of a people who have paid so dearly for their freedom.

A. BRAGIN

...ACY...

...which he ...uphold the ...caraguan peo... ...cy, for free... ...ace."

...made projec... ...at the contras ... implant "de... ...aragua.

...Pais (Spain)

...applaud. Ac... ...ms, to "open ...cracy" in Ni... ...et the Sandi... ...e," that is, ...litical system ... a landslide ...1984 general election. "What is to be done about the communist regime in Nicaragua?" is his paramount concern. But who does he mean by the "Nicaraguan people"? The counterrevolutionaries, of course.

One can well imagine the "freedom" the Somozists would introduce were they to take power again in Nicaragua. Former Somoza guardsmen hold 46 of the 48 posts in the military leadership of the main armed grouping of the contras. One can well imagine the "democracy" that CIA mercenary "Crile" would establish. He is already personally responsible for the murder of more than 30 Nicaraguan peasants. One can imagine the "morals" the contras would preach, when, as AP reports, along with sundry other crimes, they smuggle large consignments of cocaine into the U.S.

It is no wonder that, observing the practice of professional criminals, the contras' leaders masquerade under aliases such as "Johnny," "Alice," "Oscar," "Franklin," "Leonel," and the like. However, if the New York Times contribution is to be believed, Elliot Abrams sees them as the "Nicaraguan people" and asks the U.S. "to open the way" for them in Nicaragua so that they can assume their rightful role as sentinels of "democracy," that is, yet another pro-American dictatorship.

V. YEGOROV

"A HELL OF A PROGRAMME"

Some bankers are the soul of altruism. Fritz Leutwiler, Governor of the Swiss National Bank, is a case in point. He has shouldered the burden of settling South Africa's external debts, not for a payoff, but because, as he puts it, it is "worthwhile." It certainly is worthwhile, considering that South Africa, whose external debt now totals $24 billion, has suspended payments.

At the same time, the selfless banker has undertaken the still thornier task of presenting South African President Peter W. Botha as a peace-loving reformer. Alluding to Botha's promises of change, Leutwiler raved that "a hell of a programme" was under way. True, in a private conversation with him the racist leader did not give details of this "hell of a programme." But then the banker does not need them as he has discerned in South Africa "progress which has accelerated in the past month" and regrets that the world has not "taken note" of it.

The world has indeed not taken note of the reforms Leutwiler has been talking about. It is difficult to note what isn't there. What is there for all to see, however, is army and police brutality in black communities, growing numbers of victims of terror, and incarcerated and tortured juveniles, all of which the banker has failed to observe.

Another brutal police attack on anti-apartheid fighters in South Africa.

TASS photo

His blind spot could be put down to the fact that besides Botha he saw only "moderate" representatives of the coloured and black population, the racist regime's yesmen. But since, as well as being unselfish, he is also sentimental, he did not take the trouble to meet "radicals," as he "does not like people who use violence."

So Leutwiler, who visited South Africa to get a "clear idea" of what was going on there, optimistically concluded that the internal situation there is stable, reforms are under way, and repayment of debts will soon be resumed. Certainly, a hell of a country!

Y. BOCHKARYOV

ROGERS AGAINST SDI?

There is a newcomer to the ranks of opponents of the "star wars" programme, none other than Bernard Rogers, Supreme Allied Commander of NATO forces in Europe.

In a Deutsche Welle broadcast, he declared that the development in the U.S.A. of a space-based anti-ballistic missile system would inevitably create zones of reduced security in Western Europe, implying that the threat of nuclear war would increase there. His paternal concern for the fate of West Europeans is touching.

What lies behind it? Is it an attempt to win easy popularity in the Old World, where the U.S. "star wars" plans are known to be unpopular, to put it mildly? Perhaps. But Roger's main objective is quite different.

There is no guarantee that having implemented the "star wars" programme the U.S. would continue to maintain its present system of nuclear defence for Europe, he elaborated. In such a contingency, West Europeans should take counteraction. The general advises adapting to military purposes the potential offered, in his competent view, by Eureka. He even suggests changing the name to the three-letter acronym EDI, or European Defence Initiative, which, he contends, would be both more modest and more closely associated with SDI. He presented his views in their definitive form in a recent U.S. News and World Report interview, wherein, employing the habitual language of military command, he demands that West Europeans launch their own programme of space armaments parallel with the American projects.

What the general is aiming at is clear. It is to develop in Western Europe a space-based ABM mini-system, at the expense of the European taxpayer, and gear it to the American "star wars" programme.

N. ZHOLKVER

THE CARDINAL FEATURE OF THE EPOCH

Professor ERIK PLETNYOV

The draft of the new text of the CPSU Programme has evoked considerable interest in many countries. The document analyzes our historic epoch in depth, provides theoretical assessments of the main trends in world politics and economics, and shows mankind the way into the future. The draft of the new text of the Party Programme defines the cardinal feature of the present epoch as the transition from capitalism to socialism and communism. Initiated by the October Revolution, this transition is a logical result of social development. Far from being an easy process, it entails overcoming historical obstacles and the resistance of the moribund capitalist system.

Capitalism on the Map of the World

As distinct from socialism which is projected into the future, capitalism is described in the draft of the new text of the CPSU Programme as an exploitative system which is past its prime but is nevertheless still strong. Marx and Engels dispelled the myth fostered by the advocates of capitalism to the effect that free competition is in complete harmony with the social character of production. Later, Lenin showed that the capitalist monopoly was becoming ever more incompatible with the increasing socialization of productive forces.

The last, monopolistic, stage of capitalism marked its heyday. At the turn of the 20th century, when imperialism had established itself as a system, there were no countries free from direct or indirect subordination to it. The internal conflicts of capitalism also reached their peak. Attempts to resolve the most serious of these, that between labour and capital, failed. This conflict manifested itself in the international arena in the form of a confrontation between two state dictatorships—that of the bourgeoisie, on the one hand, and of the working class, on the other. The general crisis of capitalism had begun.

The draft of the new text of the CPSU Programme states the obvious outcome of the world's historical evolution: **"The general crisis of capitalism is deepening.** The sphere of its hegemony is shrinking steadily, and its historical doom is becoming ever more obvious." Even a cursory look at the political map of the world will show that the social makeup of the planet and the balance of forces between capitalism and socialism are changing irreversibly.

Over the last 70 years, since capitalism developed an incurable malady, the sphere of its control over the planet's territory and population has contracted to a considerable extent. The relative proportion of the areas controlled by the large imperialist powers to the rest of the world has gone down to nearly a fifth, and of their populations, to more than a quarter, while that of colonies and semi-colonies, to a 100th and a 200th, respectively. The countries which have emerged from colonial oppression now account for about 62 per cent of the planet's surface and over a half of its population. Finally, the socialist countries' share of the planet's area has grown from one sixth to a quarter, and of its population, from a twelfth to a third.

But this is not only a question of statistics. The important thing is that the countries of the socialist community are making an equal, collective and mutually beneficial use of their resources. The new Comprehensive Programme for the scientific and technological progress of the CMEA member states over the period of up to the year 2000 is a case in point. Priority areas for all-round cooperation include electronics, comprehensive automation, atomic power engineering, the development of new materials and their manufacturing and processing techniques, and biotechnology. This confirms the thesis of the draft of the new text of the CPSU Programme which says: "The higher and closer to each other the socialist countries' standards of social development are, the richer and deeper will be their cooperation and the more organic the process of their drawing together."

The trends prevalent in the capitalist world are of an entirely different nature. As a result of the unevenness of development characteristic of capitalism, stronger countries enrich themselves by plundering weaker ones and seek to exacerbate the latter's backwardness. "Taking advantage of the newly independent nations' economic and technological dependence and their unequal position in the world capitalist economy, imperialism is ruthlessly exploitng them and levies a multibillion-dollar tribute on them which exhausts their economies," the draft of the new text of the CPSU Programme says. The developing countries' aggregate foreign debt has reached $1,000 billion.

The capitalist concentration and internationalization of production have resulted, the draft of the new text of the CPSU Programme points out, in "the strengthening of transnational corporations which make fabulous profits through exploiting working people on a world scale."

Cosmetics to No Purpose

Since the start of its general crisis a relatively short time ago moribund capitalism has never resorted to social and economic cosmetics as ingeniously as it does now. It is compelled to camouflage its inhumane, exploitative nature both by internal factors (the processes of production and labour socialization) and external ones (economic competition with the socialist world).

Characterizing the present stage of the deepening of the general crisis of capitalism, the draft of the new text of the CPSU Programme begins by stating that modern capitalism is quite different from what it was in the middle, let alone at the beginning, of this century. All the aspects of modern capitalism—its productive forces, its economic base, home and foreign policy and its ideological superstructure—are undergoing profound changes.

Take, for example, the scientific and technological revolution. Capitalist society today, the draft of the new text of the CPSU Programme says, "seeks to put the latest achievements of science and technology at its service." The scientific and technological revolution differs from the evolutionary progress of science and technology in that the former emphasizes a faster development of man compared to other elements in the productive forces. The scientific and technological revolution brings with it the formation and exploitation, on a mass scale, of a knowledgeable work force capable of operating complicated machinery. High-technology labour reduces working hours and creates more wealth—surplus value included—

than low-technology labour. "The mechanism of exploitation has become more complex and refined," the draft of the new text of the CPSU Programme says. "Increasingly high profits are squeezed from the workers' skill, intellectual power and nervous energy." This conclusion is borne out by the re-channelling of the work force to more profitable branches, specifically to the information sector concerned with data processing and distribution. According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, the proportion of the economically active population employed in the information sector grew from 28 to 38 per cent in Britain between 1951 and 1971; from 23 to 35 per cent in France from 1954 to 1975, and from 20 to 35 per cent in the F.R.G. between 1950 and 1976. In the U.S. this sector accounts for over 55 per cent of all those employed.

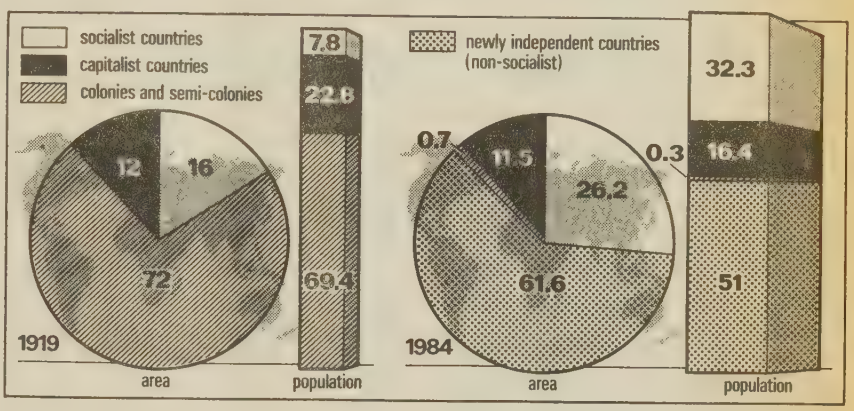
Capitalist production relations have also undergone striking changes. Early-20th century capitalism was merely monopolistic. In the leading imperialist countries the elements of state-monopoly capitalism began to take shape during World War I. It was towards the middle of the 20th century that capitalist monopolies joined forces with the imperialist state to form an integral mechanism of exploitation, oppression and expansionism. Highly developed state-monopoly economies have taken shape in all the industrialized capitalist countries over the past 30 years.

State and private monopolies are especially closely linked in the production and sale of weapons, in particular, weapons of mass destruction. A quarter of a century ago the then U.S. President was dismayed to identify the existence of the military-industrial complex in the United States. In the mid-seventies Professor J.K. Galbraith revealed "a bureaucratic symbiosis" between arms companies and the Pentagon. The draft of the new text of the CPSU Programme points to "a sinister alliance between merchants of death and imperialist state power. This alliance is the mainstay of extreme reactionaries, a constant and increasing source of war danger."

The arms race unleashed by imperialism has pushed the richest capitalist countries to the verge of bankruptcy. Even in the United States, federal budget revenues cover slightly over a quarter of military spending. In the meantime, U.S. military allocations have come close to $300 billion annually. It is no wonder, therefore, that the U.S. state debt amounts to $2,000 billion.

In the sphere of social relations, partial concessions to the working people are ever more frequently combined with direct onslaughts by the monopolies and the capitalist state on their rights and living standards. "In the political sphere, imperialism is tending to grow increasingly reactionary right across the board," the draft of the new text of the CPSU Programme says. The document points out that state-monopoly capital's onslaught on working people's rights is sometimes cleverly camouflaged. But, it says, "no 'modifications' or manoeuvres by modern capitalism abolish or can abolish the laws that govern its development, remove the acute antagonism between labour and capital, the monopolies and society, or release the historically doomed capitalist system from an all-embracing crisis."

SHRINKAGE OF THE SPHERE OF CAPITALIST DOMINATION (per cent)



Has Always Been and Remains

Class instinct has, of course, made the bourgeoisie aware that its time is running out and that the working class is destined to replace it as the leading force in society. In an effort to prolong the existence of the bourgeoisie, reformist and revisionist ideologists inculcate in the masses the idea that the working class is "vanishing," "dissolving," "degenerating."

Since the modern working class differs considerably from the proletariat of old, bourgeois reformists and revisionists say, it can no longer play a revolutionary role. They manipulate statistics to prove their point. Indeed, the proportion of trained, skilled operators, engineers and technicians to the total work force is growing. But this merely shows that among those working for hire the proportion of those who have mastered new skills is increasing with the result that the general intellectual level of the working class is going up. Revisionists, on the other hand, claim that factory hands have always been exclusively engaged in hard manual work, and that drawing the proletariat into brainwork means that the working class as such will cease to exist.

The growing complexity of work operations and the rising cost of production equipment per worker, inevitable concomitants of the scientific and technological revolution, are interpreted in the same way. For instance, the fact that between 1960 and 1983 the cost of equipment per worker increased from $31,000 to $102,300 (in 1972 prices), i.e., more than tripled, suggests, according to bourgeois scientists, that a hired worker has risen from the status of a proletarian to that of an expert, and that the working class itself has moved into a different class category. Actually, a hired worker in the capitalist world is today more destitute and exploited than ever before. All the conditions of his existence compel him to fight for liberation although the chains with which the bourgeoisie is trying to hold him are sometimes made of gold, as Marx predicted they would be.

What the draft of the new text of the CPSU Programme has to say about the growing role of the modern working class is of special importance. "**The working class has always been and remains the main revolutionary class of the modern epoch,**" it says. "In the capitalist world it is the main force fighting to overthrow the system of exploitation and build a new society." The draft of the new text of the CPSU Programme dispels reformist and revisionist myths and regards the growing use of science in production and the increasing proportion of the working class engaged in mental work as an objective argument in favour of enhancing the role of the working class at present and in the future.

Understanding of the complex mechanisms of social development is not easily accessible to the bulk of working people. The Communists offer them help in acquiring such understanding. The strength of the Communist parties lies in the fact that they are showing society the way out of the crisis, putting forward a realistic alternative to the last social system based on the exploitation of man by man and providing socially optimistic answers to the crucial issues of our day.

■

It was on January 26, 1950, two and a half years after independence, that India became a republic, and Republic Day is observed as the country's national holiday. Now the Indian people have embarked on their seventh five-year plan, covering the fiscal years 1985-90. One of its biggest projects is a far-reaching national programme to make the Ganges clean.

BATTLE FOR A CLEAN GANGES

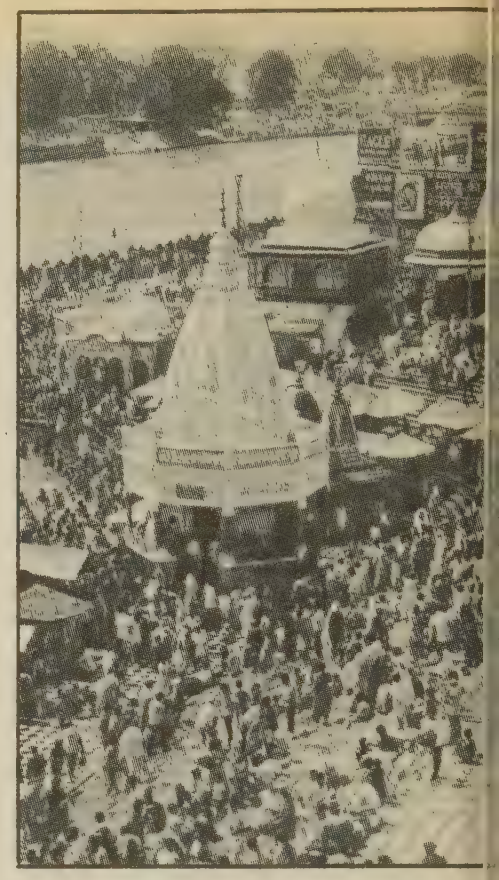
The path dropped so unexpectedly that my guide barely had time to prevent me plunging down to the foot of an outcropping of rock hanging over Devaprayag. The little township in northern India—a hundred mud houses and about as many tiny Hindu temples—huddles on the steep banks of two rivers, the Bhagirathi and the Alaknanda, which meet to form the Ganges, the greatest river in India which flows more than 2,500 kilometres from northern Hindustan to the Bay of Bengal in the southeast.

"The Ganga, of all the rivers of India, has held our heart captive and drawn uncounted millions to her banks since the dawn of history," Jawaharlal Nehru wrote. "The story of the Ganga—from her source to the sea, from old times to new—is the story of India's civilization and culture, of the rise and fall of empires, of great and proud cities, of the adventure of man and quest of the mind who has so occupied India's thinkers."

The word "Ganga" is feminine, and this explains why it is worshipped in female terms with epithets such as "Mother Ganga," "daughter of the heavens," "beloved" and "eternal soul."

The River: The Beginning and the End

A little downstream, in Rishikesh, I joined a group of pilgrims heading towards the river. "Ganga Maiya ki Jai," they chanted in chorus, shedding their outer garments. "We bow to you, Mother Ganga." Having travelled from afar to its banks, considered sacred, they immersed themselves reverently, with happy smiles, in the turbulent



Pilgrims on the banks of the Ganges at Hardwar.

D.P.R.K.: RESPONSIBLE APPROACH

On the eve of the New Year the Democratic People's Republic of Korea proposed that the Korean peninsula become a nuclear-free zone, that all the U.S. troops and their nuclear arsenals be removed from South Korea. This could be accompanied by limiting military manoeuvres on the Korean peninsula and around it and reducing the number of armed forces of North and South in the area of the demarcation zone.

Now Pyongyang has advanced another initiative.

The government of the D.P.R.K., a statement issued by the republic's Foreign Ministry says, has decided, as of February 1, not to hold large-scale military exercises on its territory and, moreover, to end all military exercises during negotiations between North and South.

This decision, which is aimed at reducing the tension in the area of the Korean peninsula and creating the most auspicious conditions for dialogue between Pyongyang and Seoul, was taken unilaterally. But the country's public expects that the responsible approach of their government to the question of preserving peace and its new good-will gesture will be properly appreciated, understood and supported by its partners in the dialogue the D.P.R.K. is advocating. It is to be hoped that the United States and South Korea will undertake similar pledges.

Pyongyang is convinced that the termination of large-scale military manoeuvres on the Korean peninsula could lead to positive changes in the relations between the D.P.R.K. and the United States and be instrumental in removing mutual mistrust and suspicion.

The U.S. Administration and the Seoul authorities, which are loud in their protestations of desire for peace, now have an opportunity to prove that they really want to resolve the Korean issue and bring about the peaceful reunification of the country. It is perfectly plain that a turn for the better on the Korean peninsula would lead to further positive changes throughout the Asian and Pacific region and in the world generally.

V. GODYNA

stream. The millions upon millions of practising Hindus in India believe that the Ganges washes away their sins and purifies them spiritually.

Geographically speaking, the source of the Ganges is a few dozen kilometres to the north of Devaprayag, at the foot of the Gangotri Glacier in the Himalayas. It is only the most devout pilgrims who reach the site. Having equipped ourselves with simple climbing aids, Mr R. Menon, curator of the Devaprayag Museum, and I reached an ice cave called Gomukh, "cow's mouth," for reasons that even my companion could not explain. It spews out a foaming pristine stream which runs down sharp ice-bound rocks.

This is the source of the Ganges, though locally it is called the Bhagirathi.

"Long ago King Bhagirathi came here to find a cure for the souls of his poor ancestors, who had fallen prey to an evil demon," Menon told me. "The heavens heard his prayers and told him that the beautiful Ganga, daughter of King Himavat and the nymph Mena, was living alone in the Gomukh cave and that she could help him. Bhagirathi persuaded Ganga to come down to earth to breathe life into a valley at the foot of the glacier and save the souls of the king's ancestors.

"That is why this part of the Ganges continues to bear the king's name, Bhagirathi."

The 250 million Indians who live in the basin of the great river, which takes up almost a quarter of the country's area, believe in that beautiful legend. But there are more believers than that: Hindus from all over India travel to the Ganges to immerse themselves in its waters and offer sacrifice to the sacred river.

Hundreds of millions of Indians begin their lives with the Ganges and end them in its waters: the bodies of the deceased are burned and the ashes scattered on the water of the "eternal soul" of India.

Time to Act

Recounting the legend of the origin of the Ganges, my guide from Devaprayag omitted one remarkable detail, which was later supplemented by Mr Bhatnagar, a staff writer from a newspaper published in Varanasi, a city in the middle reaches of the great river. The daughter of King Himavat and the nymph Mena, he told me, did not want to go down into the valley not only because she cherished her solitude: she feared that her water would be polluted when it came into contact with everyday life.

The fears of "the daughter of heavens" have proved only too real. In Varanasi alone about 30,000 cremated bodies, some of them only half-incinerated, are thrown into the Ganges every year. Hundreds of tanneries situated along the river's 2,500-kilometre length badly pollute its waters. The waste of many other factories is dumped in it. The "green revolution" in agriculture, which involves the application of chemical fertilizers and herbicides on a mass scale, causes thousands of poisonous rivulets to flow into the Ganges. Inadequate filters in the sewage systems of more than 50 major cities on the banks of the Ganges also contribute to pollution. Sewage ditches from countless villages also end in the river.

As a consequence, Mr D.S. Bagga, a municipal official in Varanasi, told me, for most of its length the Ganges has already become a health hazard not only for the population of its basin and millions of pilgrims but also for people in distant parts of the country, for whom pilgrims regularly take "sacred water" from the Ganges in brass cans. These are only some of the reasons, according to Mr Bagga, why a determined nationwide effort to cleanse the Ganges is long overdue. The situation is no longer tolerable and it is time to act.

Shortly after becoming Prime Minister late in 1984 Rajiv Gandhi formulated the idea of a national project to prevent the further pollution of the great river and to cleanse its water. A Central Ganga Authority was established under his chairmanship.

"The purpose of our organization is to take comprehensive engineering and irrigation measures to make the water of the Ganges, already at the first stage of the programme and even in the most polluted places, sufficiently clean for ritual ablutions," the Authority's chief engineer, Mr K. Sivaramakrishnan, said. "Simultaneously, steps will be taken for the biological purification of the Ganges, which is a source of drinking water for towns and villages on its banks. About 2.4 billion rupees, equivalent to $200 million, have been appropriated for the purpose in the 7th five-year-plan period."

Indian experts and workers have already launched the first phase of the programme. The immensely large-scale and complex operation to cleanse the Ganges was initiated in the upper reaches of the river, near Hardwar, which attracts particularly large numbers of pilgrims. The supervisor of the programme at that site, Mr S.P. Gangal, told me:

"At the start of the new year of 1986 four high-capacity pumping stations were put into operation here to pump the effluents of the municipal sewage system into special purification tanks. Processes were developed by us to convert human waste into fertilizer and biogas. Our engineering facilities, therefore, will both keep the Ganges clean and contribute to the national economy. Moreover, mechanical and biological filters have been and continue to be installed in a number of tributaries to help replenish the Ganges with clean water. Work in 29 more major cities on the banks of the Ganges is to be started approximately along the same lines within the next five years."

A most important aspect of this truly national project consists of concrete measures which have largely been drawn up, for substantially reducing the dumping of industrial waste in the river. According to expert estimates, about 5,000 tons of waste, some of it containing chemical impurities, are dumped every day in the middle reaches of the river, an area which has seen an industrial boom in the past few years. It is planned to build special filters at 200 state-owned plants situated in this part of the river. The effluents of these plants are to be eventually diverted into special collectors.

Private proprietors, who disregard the purification programme in order to maximize their profits, present a more difficult problem. However, legal sanctions have been worked out to empower the state to fine such factory owners. Specialists from the Central Ganga Authority believe that this will make businessmen comply with requirements as to the installation of standard purification facilities in their plants.

All this taken together will make life healthier for a third of the Indian population who live in the basin of the Ganges, and keep it clean for future generations.

Indian and foreign hydrologists say that the water of the Ganges has a unique capacity for self-purification. Yet, the Ganges has continued to suffer more and more as a result of human activity. Now man has started to help the river in order to help himself.

The ecological battle for the Ganges is assuming ever wider proportions.

L. ZHEGALOV
Our Own Correspondent

REFLECTIONS ON TWO DISCUSSIONS

LEV TOLKUNOV
Chairman, Soviet Committee
for European Security and Cooperation

At the end of last year a delegation of the Soviet Committee for European Security and Cooperation had occasion to take part in two discussions, one in Bonn, sponsored by the Friedrich Ebert foundation, with leading functionaries of the Social Democratic Party of Germany, and the other held a few days later in Geneva under the auspices of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research and the French Institute of International Research.

The discussions took place a few weeks after the Soviet-American summit in Geneva. The spirit of that important event in world affairs pervaded the exchange of views at the Friedrich Ebert foundation. The prospect of changes for the better on the world scene seemed to temper the December cold at Bonn. The Soviet and F.R.G. participants in the discussion were unanimous that these changes had to be consolidated, détente revived and disarmament tackled by joint effort.

That there were no few obstacles to this was made plain at the conference on security and disarmament in Europe held in Geneva, where a group of prominent U.S. political figures did their utmost to justify arms buildup plans and the extension of the confrontation to outer space.

The world today presents a complex and contradictory picture indeed, and the problems facing humanity are formidable. Where do we go from here? A clear-cut answer to the fundamental questions of the time is given in the statement by CPSU General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev outlining the prospects of world development to the end of the century and calling for the completion of the process of ridding the world of nuclear weapons in the course of the next 15 years. Moscow has repeatedly demonstrated a constructive approach to this question. The U.S.S.R. considers it essential to reverse the dangerous course of events by force of argument, example and common sense. There is no time to lose. In face of the universal nuclear threat we must master the art of living together. This is the burden of the message contained in the profoundly humane, constructive statement of the Soviet leadership.

Europe looks peaceful and untroubled compared with other continents. The Christmas and New Year's holidays were celebrated as usual, and now the people have resumed their normal day-to-day occupations. A closer look, however, reveals a growing disquiet caused by the threat of nuclear war. The build-up of military potential, primarily the missile and nuclear, makes the confrontation in Europe of two opposing military alignments—NATO and the Warsaw Treaty Organization—particularly dangerous. These lineups, the most powerful of our time, have been facing each other for decades and some people are accustomed to thinking that this confrontation will not develop into war or even into a collision.

But such a passive attitude is misplaced. It is common knowledge that Washington is making feverish efforts to upset the existing military-strategic balance in its own favour. And this affects not least of all Europe.

No Time to Lose

CPSU General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev's visit to France last year, the Soviet leader's first official visit abroad, not only revealed the outlook for Franco-Soviet relations. It afforded an opportunity for a frank examination of the cardinal problems relating to the strengthening of European security. In his address to French parliamentarians he put forward a thesis that totally repudiates existing misconceptions. "European security," he said, "cannot be ensured by military means, by armed force." Only peaceful coexistence, détente, disarmament, and promotion of international cooperation can ensure European and world security.

A month later the Soviet-American summit took place in Geneva. The whole world, Europe of course included, followed its progress with the closest attention. Not all hopes reposed in it materialized. But a beginning, a good, promising beginning, was made.

The preparations for the Geneva meeting proceeded against the background of far-reaching Soviet initiatives and proposals aimed at reversing the dangerous course of events.

But how did the U.S. Administration react to these initiatives? To the termination of all nuclear tests it replied with new nuclear explosions. To the reduction in the number of medium-range missiles in Europe, with stepped-up deployment of Pershing 2 and cruise missiles. And to the proposal to keep outer space peaceful it replied by speeding up plans to give effect to the Strategic Defence Initiative.

But this did not weaken the determination of the Soviet Union to work for curbs on the arms race.

Millions of people are giving serious thought to the present and the future. The deployment in Western Europe of the U.S. first-strike nuclear missiles did not make it any more secure. The situation has been further worsened by the consent given by the governments of Britain and the F.R.G. to take part in the U.S. "star wars" plans.

Even quarters that usually support Washington policy are evincing doubts as regards the White House "initiative." There is a growing conflict of views between political parties and in parliaments on the cardinal issues of West European-U.S. relations and ways and means of restoring détente and improving East-West relations.

Peace, the Paramount Issue

Most of those who participated in the Bonn discussion were supporters of the policy of the Social Democratic Party. That policy was set forth at the meeting by Willy Brandt, Chairman of the SDP, Egon Bahr, Chairman of the Bundestag subcommittee on disarmament and arms control, and Horst Ehmke, SDP deputy floor leader in the Bundestag. The speeches of the three prominent leaders of the F.R.G. Social Democrats showed that concern for the strengthening of world peace and European security is central to the SDP's internatio-

nal policy. The SDP places peace above all other political objectives. Without peace everything else is worthless. The emphasis on this idea is, in my opinion, the main political distinguishing feature of the party, which, by advancing a clear-cut alternative after going into the opposition, has succeeded in asserting its political identity and creating a climate for winning support for its policy.

The Social Democrats of the F.R.G. see the main avenue to improving the situation on the European continent in "partnership in security." This above all implies taking measures to build confidence in Europe. The Social Democrats call for the conclusion of an agreement renouncing first use of nuclear and conventional weapons. They stand for the creation in Europe of zones free of nuclear and chemical weapons, for a ban on biological and chemical weapons, an end to the deployment of U.S. missiles in the F.R.G. and the withdrawal of those already deployed there, and the gradual reduction of tactical nuclear weapons in Europe.

The West German Social Democrats' opposition to the "star wars" plans was emphatically expressed at the Bonn meeting. "More weapons do not mean more security, on the contrary, accumulation of weapons undermines security," Horst Ehmke said in his report. Egon Bahr stressed that SDI has a definitely destabilizing effect. Willy Brandt said that the emphasis should be placed on a better policy, not on better weapons. This is the way out for both Europe and the whole world. To strengthen Europe as a zone of guaranteed security is the common task of all European states.

The Social Democrats stand for the resumption of the policy of détente and an end to confrontation. They actively advocate closer ties between the F.R.G. and the U.S.S.R. at all levels.

No communiqué or joint statement for the press was adopted at the Bonn meeting. It was a frank discussion of a wide range of problems. Not always did our views coincide in appraising one or another aspect of West German policy and the political situation in the F.R.G., especially as regards the real danger of revanchism. It seems to me that the West German Social Democrats do not have a clear understanding of some aspects of Soviet policy.

For a Climate of Confidence

Our delegation was asked a great many questions primarily with regard to our policy on security. Some of these questions have been dealt with repeatedly in the press, but regrettably, judging by what was said during the discussion, there appeared to be some lack of understanding even in such a qualified auditorium of the Soviet Union's arguments and conclusions.

Needless to say, the Social Democrats have their own views. It would be a mistake to equate their ideology and policy with ours. For instance, the Social Democrats, and especially Egon Bahr, made a point of the "defensive character" of NATO, maintaining that the bloc "helps to strengthen European peace." We, of course, could not agree with that, just as some Social Democrats did not agree with our appraisal of manifestations of revanchism in the F.R.G.

We made it clear that we have no interest in the worsening of relations between the Federal Republic and its NATO allies, including the United States. We are for universal security, for equal cooperation among all nations. In the present situation it would be naive to seek security in winning over to one's own side states belonging to a different social system. What would be gained by that? It would only increase suspicion and lead to greater confrontation. What is needed is a climate of trust, and for this the prime requisites are profound realism and the political courage to take steps capable of getting things off the ground, putting an end to the arms race and beginning the process of arms reduction. There is no substitute for a policy commensurate with the needs of all peoples.

Besides the problems of strategic and medium-range nuclear weapons and of preventing the militarization of outer space, the meeting discussed the implications of measures aimed at the development of general-duty armed forces and the buildup of conventional armaments, and at the elaboration and application of new military concepts that increase the danger of the outbreak of war in Europe. The NATO concept of strikes "in depth" (at second echelons and reserves)—in other words, the "Rogers plan"—was examined in this military-political context.

No few alternative variants for ensuring the security of Europe in general and individual countries in particular have been advanced in opposition to this plan. They have been widely discussed in recent years. The authors of these alternative concepts of security stress that these proposals are directed at reducing the danger of war breaking out in Europe, at scaling down the military confrontation and substantially reducing military spending. They, among them Social Democrats, question many of the figures given by the Pentagon and NATO headquarters as regards the balance of forces in Europe and expose the more flagrant distortions of data on the Warsaw Treaty armed forces. Unbiased observers seek to make a more sober assessment of the military doctrines and the strategy and tactics of the U.S.S.R. and the other Warsaw Treaty countries. But they too tend at times to display insufficient understanding of the legitimate security interests of the U.S.S.R. and its allies, their geostrategic location, their historical experience and the traditions that have shaped Soviet military thinking. They often unjustly place the military policies of the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. on the same plane and advance the false thesis of the equal responsibility of the "superpowers."

We all agreed at the Bonn meeting that fundamentally new and bold polit-

"No to SDI. Armaments in outer space mean war on Earth," reads the message on the streamer in one of the many demonstrations in the F.R.G. against the American "star wars" plans.

TASS photo

ical solutions are needed today, solutions which must be given precedence over the view that peace can be ensured by new military technology. What is needed is fresh ideas in order to stop marking time and to give substantial impetus to the cause of security and cooperation in Europe, while preserving everything positive that has been achieved on our continent in preceding decades. Existing differences in political convictions and world outlook should not prevent us from moving forward in this direction. The idea of preserving stable and lasting peace today unites the broadest sections of society in Europe. The Social Democrats and ourselves were of one mind that joint action by the most diverse forces in defence of peace and to ensure genuine security is perfectly feasible and could be highly productive.

All sorts of ideas for building security in Europe are being advanced. But it should be frankly said that not every idea, however rational it might appear to be, is ipso facto acceptable to everyone. Nobody has the monopoly on absolute truth, all the more so in such a sensitive area as security. Every decision, every step, must be carefully weighed and agreed upon so as not to damage the legitimate interests of those with whom that security is to be built.

The new structure of relations between the two systems in Europe in the changed conditions of the present time, conditions which cannot be ignored and must serve as the main guideposts, must necessarily proceed from the top-priority tasks of the day—the safeguarding of European and world peace, promotion of wide-scale cooperation on the continent, and complementing political détente with the scaling down of military tension. Consequently, it is clear that full account must be taken of the diversity of the present-day world, and specifically of Europe as regards the social and political character of the various countries, their interests and of the individuality of every nation, every people.

Needed: a Dialogue

The Bonn meeting gave us cause for reflection on the fact that further progress in building security and cooperation in Europe is impossible without the broadest political dialogue projected at close interaction among the states and socio-political forces of our continent. There must be a corresponding broadening of ties between representatives of public opinion, science and culture. In other words, it is essential to promote intercourse among the peoples of Europe in the interests of peace and cooperation, in the interests of mutual spiritual enrichment.

The creation of a structure of broad political dialogue on a bilateral and multilateral basis was begun at the All-European Conference in Helsinki. A new impulse was given it by Mikhail Gorbachev's visit to France, the Soviet-American summit, and the latest statement by the CPSU General Secretary. All this could open the way to a further search for genuine relations of peace and security among the peoples of our continent. Why should all Europeans not give thought to ways and means of improving the already existing mechanism of such a dialogue? Why not give thought to the forms a dialogue between the CMEA and the EEC could take, to the specific opportunities open to them for contributing to the common cause?

And, of course, the need to develop and deepen dialogue between public and political organizations in East and West should not be forgotten. Such a broad political dialogue at different levels could provide openings not only for exchanges of views on bilateral relations and European security, but also on the world situation. It should be aimed at bringing the positions of different sides on cardinal issues closer together, working out common concepts of a new structure of interstate relations in Europe, and promoting cooperation in giving effect to them. The most important object of political dialogue is the search for solutions making for peace.

As regards the directions to be pursued in such a dialogue, they are indicated by life itself. Above all it is a matter of building confidence in interstate relations. This could be greatly facilitated by concretizing and imparting maximum effectiveness to the principle of renunciation of the use of force. Much could be gained also by mutually complementary confidence and security-building measures and by preventing incorrect interpretation of the actions of the other side in conditions of heightened military confrontation.

Europe is waiting for the positive completion of the second round of the Stockholm conference, for the achievement of real progress in ending the buildup of armaments, not only nuclear but also chemical and conventional. There is every possibility for the creation in Europe of zones free of nuclear and chemical weapons.

The economic ties between East and West in Europe and the search for new forms of these ties hold out great promise.

A great deal can be done in the sphere of scientific and technological cooperation, particularly as regards the peaceful use of outer space.

The urgency of the problem of preserving and improving the environment—a problem that cannot be solved without concerted effort—is common knowledge.

Much can be done in the humanitarian sphere. There must be more exchanges of cultural values, of information about the life of the different peoples, and more mutual respect and sympathy for one another. The Soviet Union attaches great importance to guarantees of human rights, holding that hypocrisy and speculation should be excluded from this sphere.

And lastly, why not give thought to giving Europe a bigger role in the settlement of existing conflict situations and preventing new ones from arising beyond the bounds of the continent? Much remains to be done to normalize international economic, scientific and technological ties, to remove artificial barriers and discriminatory restrictions in trade, and to establish a new international economic order.

Needless to say, productive dialogue on all these questions could be conducted not only on an interstate basis, but also between the public and political circles of the continent's countries desirous of making their own contribution to the building of a system of security and cooperation in Europe. We are for the creation and use of international mechanisms and institutions that would make it possible to find the optimal balance between national, state interests and general human interests. We are for heightening the role of the United Nations in the strengthening of peace and the promotion of international cooperation. The Soviet Union attaches much importance to the further promotion of peaceful good-neighbourship and cooperation among the countries of Europe. An indispensable condition of the stability of positive processes in this as well as in other regions is respect of the territorial and political realities that have become established as a result of World War II.

The West German Social Democrats voiced similar thoughts, if perhaps in different form and different wordings. Horst Ehmke, for instance, devoted practically the whole of his report to the concept of "partnership in security," which in brief consists in strict observance of the principles of peaceful coexistence and taking account of the legitimate interests of the sides. Underlying the SDP concept of "partnership in security" is the idea of joint security as opposed to the concept of unilateral security. In one of his lectures, Willy Brandt said that "the possibility of mutual destruction leaves no chance of victory: every attempt to extricate oneself from this situation through unilateral armament destabilizes the security of the nations."

One can hardly disagree with the substance of these views.

(To be concluded)

The recent resignation of Defence Secretary Michael Heseltine has again turned the spotlight on the activities of the British military-industrial complex.

WHO'S WHO IN THE WAR GAME

Military-industrial complex. The expression, coined by the outgoing President Dwight D. Eisenhower in the early 1960s, refers to the sinister alliance of death merchants and the imperialist state. Since then it has largely been used of the United States where the interests of the industrial and financial oligarchy, the military and politicians are closely intertwined, and are largely responsible for the growing arms race.

Military-industrial complexes, however, exist in other capitalist countries as well. Britain, for example, has long had a thriving MIC of its own.

At the exclusive Athenaeum Club the "old boy network" has no communication barriers in discussing business. Members went to the same public schools and universities or served in the guards together. The Athenaeum has amongst its members 14 directors of major military-industrial companies who have the opportunity to discuss military supplies personally with Sir Frank Cooper, former Permanent Under Secretary of State at the Ministry of Defence, who is also a member of the club.

Former Defence Secretary Michael Heseltine belongs to the Carlton Club next door, as do his Parliamentary Under Secretary of State John Lee, president of Westland Lord Oldington, the directors of the National Westminster and Lloyds banks, Sir Francis Tombs, director of Rolls-Royce, and many other members of the ruling class.

Multimillion arms deals are discussed in the Carlton and other exclusive clubs on Pall Mall. (This is described in detail in the recently published book "The Military-Industrial Complex in Great Britain" by Alexander Shein.)

The elite that runs the modern MIC includes:

—presidents, chairmen and directors of industrial, construction, transport and other companies;

—directors of top banking monopolies and other financial institutions linked through personal ties and credit agreements with major arms manufacturers;

—reactionary politicians, including Defence Ministry chiefs;

—top army officers;

—scientists involved in military research and development and in the manufacture of modern weapons;

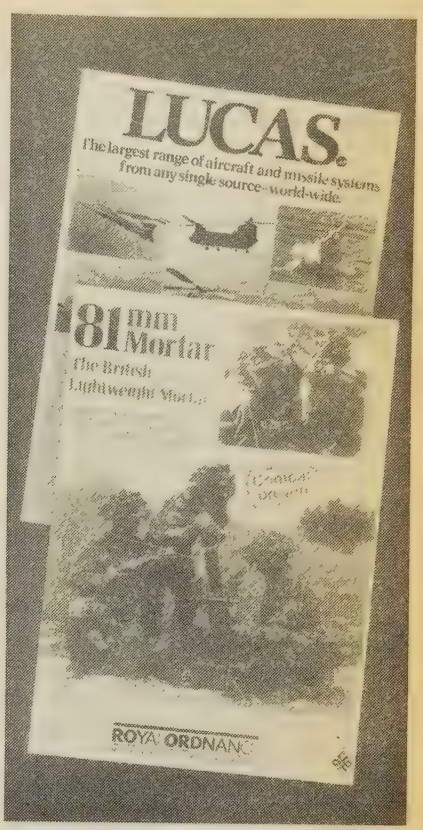
—the MIC is also trying to enlist diplomats, mass media barons and opportunistic trade union leaders.

The military and financial elite that forms the core of the British MIC derives its strength from being a united front. Its members share lust for gain, interdependent interests and, not least, fierce anti-communism. The MIC elite displays great flexibility in regrouping its ranks. Yesterday's defence secretary becomes head of a military corporation, retired generals and admirals, high-ranking civil servants, and politicians join boards of directors of industrial corporations and banks.

Pall Mall is within ten minutes' walk of 10 Downing Street, the residence of the British prime ministers, where the cabinet meet every Thursday. In the course of the six and a half years of Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government many politicians have left the cabinet. Where have they gone?

Lord Carrington in the intervals between holding ministerial posts (Defence Secretary from 1970 to 1974 and Foreign Secretary from 1979 to 1982) was director of several major corporations. In 1983 he was made chairman of General Electric which has close links with the military business and in 1984 he was appointed Secretary-General of NATO. He was succeeded at General Electric by Northern Ireland Secretary James Prior. John Nott, Defence Secretary in Thatcher's first cabinet, now heads Lazard Brothers, a commercial bank which forms the financial core of Pearson and Son, a leading military contractor to the Defence Ministry.

The influence of the military in the British government has been increasing since the Falklands war in the spring of 1982. In late 1982 two top advisers to Margaret Thatcher were appointed. Sir Anthony Parsons, special adviser on foreign affairs, was a career officer turned diplomat in recent years, Britain's ambassador to the United Nations. Brian Jackling worked at the Defence



The British military-industrial complex advertises its wares.

Photo from Armed Forces Journal (U.S.A.)

Ministry and had taken part in the Falklands campaign.

Conversely, retired top army officers and senior Defence Ministry officials frequently become directors of armaments firms that work for the Defence Ministry. In May 1976 the then Defence Secretary told parliament that, in the first half of the 1970s, 97 top officers and 86 Defence Ministry officials had accepted posts with military corporations. According to the magazine Labour Research, between 1975 and 1980, 225 top British army officers became directors, managers and advisers to various firms, including international oil and chemical consortia.

Official British handbooks state that "supreme responsibility for national defence rests with the government as a whole, which is responsible to Parliament." This provision, however, is not always remembered on Downing Street. For instance, when the Thatcher government needed parliamentary support for its decision to send an armada to the South Atlantic during the Falklands crisis, it easily obtained it through the Conservative majority in the House of Commons. However, Parliament was not told the exact date when American cruise missiles began to be deployed in Britain. The case of Clive Ponting, a "rebel" Defence Ministry official, has shown that the government carefully concealed both from Parliament and the British people the truth about the unseemly aspects of the Falklands war, notably the circumstances of the sinking of the Argentine cruiser General Belgrano. As Anthony Sampson, a leading British political scientist, put it, the Defence Ministry was the first of the "giant ministries" to get out of Parliament's control.

At the same time Parliament is the scene of active lobbying on behalf of the interests of military monopolies by members of the Tory and other parties. This writer sat in on debates over military expenditure for fiscal 1983/84. Conservative MP Robert Atkins, in whose constituency British Aerospace factories are located, promoted the company's new Alarm missile and a new combat plane, the ACA, developed jointly with the F.R.G. and Italy. He declared his interest with disarming candour when he said: "The House will not be surprised to learn that I seek to take the British Aerospace whip." During that same debates Right-wing Labour MP Kevin McNamara also advocated the Alarm missile and a training aircraft, P-164, and Liberal MP Paddy Ashdown spoke on behalf of Westland in support of plans for the manufacture of new naval helicopters.

At a reception I accidentally overheard a representative of the Defence Ministry's research department buttonholing a respectable grey-haired professor:

"We have singled out your pupil long ago, you know. Do you think John is prepared to deal with us? And what about his reliability?"

The scientific and technological revolution makes scientists an important element of the military-financial elite. They ensure the military research that leads to big orders for the arms manufacturers. As a rule, the military corporations enlist the best scientific, engineering and designing talent capable of developing new weaponry. Some of these people rise to top positions in the military industry, such as physics professor Samuel Edwards, who has become a director of Lucas Industries, and Dr Dennis Oliver, director of Pilkington Brothers.

Faced with a growing peace movement, the British government is at pains to justify its aggressive course. It was perhaps no accident that early in 1983 the post of Defence Secretary was given to Michael Heseltine who had worked in publishing and had experience of promotional and advertising work. One of his first acts as Defence Secretary was to set up a special team to combat the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND). To discredit the goals of CND experts from the "Heseltine team" superimposed a hammer and sickle on the CND logo.

As a result of a major row Michael Heseltine has resigned over the comparatively insignificant issue of the future of the Westland helicopter company. However, one should bear in mind that where the interests of the military-industrial complex are concerned even a minor clash can develop into a crisis.

The military-financial oligarchy is closely linked with Fleet Street publishing corporations and with all the mass media. For example, Sir William Rees-Mogg, former editor of the London Times and now vice-chairman of the board of governors of the BBC, is also on the board of General Electric. Naturally, a member of the board of this leading arms supplier promotes the line of the military-financial oligarchy through the mass media.

A recent trend in the activity of the British MIC is offering trade union leaders posts in the boards of military corporations. Derek Gladwin, regional secretary (southern region) of the General and Municipal Workers' Union, is a member of the board of British Aerospace, a post held until 1982 by Lesley Buck, former general secretary of the National Union of Sheet Metal Workers. This tendency is on the increase.

During my years as a journalist in London I got the impression that the activity of the British MIC is a taboo subject as regards media coverage. In spite of an abundance of random facts and data the influence of the military on domestic and foreign policy is played down as is the impact of militarization on the British economy as a whole. Moreover, the military-financial oligarchy is spreading the myth that cuts in arms manufacture would further aggravate unemployment and lead to an industrial slump.

A growing number of Britons, however, disagree with the case presented by the death merchants. I have attended meetings of defence industry workers where it was convincingly argued that militarization undermines the mainstays of the British economy, reducing the output of civilian goods.

I have watched the British peace movement grow from a trickle in the early 1980s to a powerful torrent. That its members are aware of the sinister role of the MIC corporations will be seen from the fact that the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament has staged a boycott of the British construction firm Tarmac which is building hangars for American cruise missiles at Greenham Common and Molesworth.

Objectively and irreversibly, the majority of Britons are becoming aware of the threat posed by the activity of the military-industrial complex which is the prime mover of the arms race. This growing awareness cannot be arrested by the propaganda teams at the Ministry of Defence or by offering membership of the military-financial club to media whizkids experienced in the promotion of militarist ideas.

M. BOGDANOV

London

IN THE FAR SOUTH

Vung Tau peninsula, with the resort of the same name and the island of Con Dao, is part of the Vung Tau-Con Dao area. Situated on the Pacific coast some 100 kilometres from Ho Chi Minh City, it was designated a separate territorial unit in 1979, for it holds great prospects for the Vietnamese economy. Considerable oil and gas deposits have been discovered there.

Oil was found at a depth of 3,000 metres on the seashelf. The wells are sunk fairly far out to sea, and Vung Tau remains a resort with attractive inns and cottages amidst green palms and bushes in bloom.

The local newspaper office, where we are treated to the traditional green tea, looks onto a square yard and tile-roofed buildings. One feels disposed to leisurely conversation. Our Vietnamese colleagues are genuinely glad to see us and tell us of their cares, and about what is going on in the area. The greatest interest is naturally aroused by the oil and gas industry.

"In July 1981," says editor-in-chief Tran Quang Huu, "a Soviet-Vietnamese agreement setting up a joint enterprise for the prospecting for and extraction of oil and gas on Vietnam's seashelf was signed. The Soviet Union provided the equipment, and three years later Soviet and Vietnamese specialists reported that the first oil had been brought up from the sea bottom.

"We'll never forget the day the news came and the joy it evoked," he goes on. "However, today we are tackling new, complex technical objectives associated with obtaining high-quality fuel from the oil we extract."

We met many Party officials, and heads of many enterprises and construction projects, and they always spoke highly of Soviet-Vietnamese cooperation. They laid special stress on the fact that, bearing in mind the urgency of accelerating progress in the most important branches of the Vietnamese economy, the Soviet Union had expressed readiness to increase its assistance in the creation, on the basis of the resources available, of oil-refining and petrochemical enterprises. They are to alter the pattern of Vietnam's economic development radically. It is indicative that these steps have been taken at a time when complex problems of socio-economic development are being tackled in all areas of national life.

The Party has taken fundamental measures to ensure economic progress in the country. They include decisions on some aspects of price formation and steps towards a general improvement of the financial and economic situation. The Party has embarked upon the development of a diversified economy, with the fullest possible use of the country's resources, the ultimate aim being the building of the material and technical basis of socialism and raising living standards.

No matter how bright the prospects for oil and gas, the traditional industries of the southern regions will not be neglected. In Vung Tau it is fishing. For centuries fishing and the processing of sea products have provided a livelihood for the population, whose life on the small peninsula, 14 km long and 6 km wide, has always been linked with the ocean. In 1976, when the first fishing cooperative was set up, all

FAITHFUL SON OF AFRICA

For those of us who are older, it is as if the tragedy happened only yesterday. The world was shaken by the news of the murder of Patrice Emery Lumumba, the first prime minister of free Congo, the man who struck out with his life and death at the laws of slavery and violence, the man who firmly believed that the freedom and independence of black Africa were not in the gift of the Belgians, the French or the British.

"I know, and feel deep in my heart, that my people ... will rise to a man to say 'No' to colonialism," he said. He struggled for freedom, doing the will of his people, and remained loyal to his duty to the end.

It was later revealed that the Belgian mercenaries who killed Lumumba were carrying out an operation planned by the White House and the CIA. Those who masterminded the murder of an outstanding fighter for the freedom of Africa are still trying to impose their will on others, resorting to violence and terror. Namibia, Afghanistan, Lebanon, Nicaragua and Libya.... Washington is plotting conspiracies, arming mercenaries and sowing terror and violence wherever the free choice of peoples is unpalatable to it.

U.S. imperialism is seeking to put

"Solidarity is our strength," say students of the Lumumba University in Moscow. They are determined to carry forward the cause of this fighter for the freedom and independence of Africa.

Photo by V. Panov

Sinking an offshore oil well in Vietnam.

TASS photo

it had were 13 boats bought from private owners. Today it owns 150 vessels, a ship repair shop and a fish-processing plant.

The fishermen we met on the piers told us that the cooperative is now working to increase production and improve the quality of its produce, a sizable proportion of which is exported. Fifteen per cent of the revenue is allocated to cover the depreciation of the basic assets, and the sum remaining after settling accounts with the state is divided between the members of the cooperative according to their labour. This is a relatively recently established practice. It has enhanced workers' interest in increasing output and improving quality. Thanks to their achievements the cooperative has more than once been named the best in the republic and awarded a challenge banner by the Council of Ministers. Today, 90 per cent of the area's fishermen are united in 65 cooperatives.

Though it is hot, the pace of life does not slacken even at noon. A youth is riding a bicycle with a metre and a half high pyramid of firewood piled on the rack. It must be very light and dry, otherwise the pyramid would have collapsed.

In the resort part of the town are villas deserted because of the heat, a seaside promenade and a sandy beach with sunshades, deck chairs and souvenir stalls offering a wide choice of articles from shells and corals to stuffed fish and lobsters. Urchins wade in the shallow water, competing with the seagulls for molluscs and crabs. It is very pleasant to bathe in the warm ocean when back in Russia winter is at its height.

For the tropics the minuscule Vung Tau peninsula is very favourably situated. Light monsoons alleviate the heat without bringing storms in their wake. With the magnificent landscapes, it is paradise for recreation and tourism.

This unique area attracted visitors centuries ago. In the 15th century, chronicles say, the Portuguese founded a colony here, and later the French and the Japanese built villas for the nobility and senior officers.

Con Dao is no less beautiful, but its history is marred by the sinister part it played in Vietnam's destiny. In the not so distant past, it was known as "hell on earth," because of the prisons built by colonialists, where patriots, members of the underground Resistance, were held. Many Vietnamese revolutionaries spent long years in the infamous "tiger's cages" constructed by U.S. jailers. For centuries those who upheld their right to human dignity and independence were tortured and murdered here.

The Vietnamese people have now won that right for all time.

B. FETISOV

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down the national liberation movement in southern Africa, the last seat of colonialism on the continent.

But today the Africans well know who are their enemies and who are their friends. In their liberation struggles they are inspired by the feat of Patrice Lumumba. His name is an inspiration to those who wish to be masters in their own house and who have to resort to armed struggle to uphold their right to life and dignity.

On the eve of Patrice Lumumba Commemoration Day, observed on January 17 every year, a rally of students, professors, postgraduates and staff members was held at the Lumumba Peoples Friendship University in Moscow.

Christopher O. Ede of Nigeria, in his first year in the faculty of medicine, came to the rally with his fellow students. Patrice Lumumba is not only a hero but also a man in the highest sense of the word for each of us—and there are students here from Colombia and Peru, India and Jordan, Nepal and Syria, he said. He was a trailblazer and that is always difficult. This is especially clear to those who live in the Third World, in countries which embarked on the path of independent development only recently. Our fathers won political independence for our countries and it is our turn to take over. It is our duty to struggle for economic independence. That is why we are here, in the Soviet capital. The knowledge we are acquiring is badly needed by our peoples. I think it entirely appropriate that the university which teaches young people from newly independent countries should have been named after a freedom fighter, Christopher O. Ede went on to say. The establishment of such an educational institution is not merely a tribute on the part of the Soviet people to the memory of a loyal son of Africa but also a concrete and tangible act of assistance to those who are building a new life.

Christopher had in his hand a sheet of paper from a notepad. On it was a phrase in English. He held it out and said: "I should like New Times readers to recollect these words from Lumumba's last letter to his wife: 'The day will come when history will pass its judgement. It will be the history taught in countries liberated from colonialism and its puppets. Africa will write its own history, and in north and south it will be a history of glory and dignity.'"

Mamadou Kane comes from Senegal. He is a second-year student in the faculty of history and philology. Why do people revere the memory of Lumumba? "I have already been asked that question," Mamadou replied. "It was here, in Moscow, at the World Youth Festival last summer in which I took part as a member of the Senegalese delegation. The question was put by an American and do you know what I told him?" Mamadou's face grew serious. "Lumumba gave expression to the interests not only of his own people but of all those who have ever aspired and continue to aspire to freedom and independence. Though every people has its heroes, Lumumba, I think, is an international hero. He saw the fate of all the oppressed and deprived in the fate of his country. And he fought not only for the independence of Congo but for freedom for the whole of Africa. "I am convinced," Mamadou said in conclusion, "that the cause initiated by Lumumba and other fighters for a new life in Africa will triumph."

T. FIRSOVA

YOU ASK...

Have the priceless paintings recently stolen from a Paris museum been found! If I am not mistaken, "La Gioconda" was also stolen at one time, but in the end it was rescued. What are the thieves counting on! It is unlikely that anyone would risk buying these masterpieces from them. My other question is: is there no way to stop the epidemic of thefts!

M. KORZHEV, Vladivostok, U.S.S.R.

THEFTS OF THE CENTURY

The "Mona Lisa" ("La Gioconda") has the dubious honour of opening the long roster of stolen major art works. Leonardo da Vinci's masterpiece was stolen from the Louvre in August 1911, causing consternation among millions of art lovers the world over. For two years French police, detectives from other countries and hundreds of volunteers searched for the painting. The "theft of the century" was much written, talked and argued about.

However, the sleuths, try as they would, did not distinguish themselves. The "Mona Lisa" bestowed its mysterious smile on a collector of antiques in Florence, named Gori. The painting was brought to him by his compatriot who worked in the Louvre and had stolen it for what he called patriotic reasons. The "patriot," who was hoping to get a reward for his services to his country, got off with just a year in prison. Meanwhile the Italians sent the "Mona Lisa" back in great style.

Interest in the "theft of the century" is still keen. One of the notable recent publications on the subject is the book "The Day They Stole the Mona Lisa" by Seymour V. Reit, recently put out in Britain. The author maintains that the theft was planned and carried out not by one man, but by a gang of crooks who devised a clever stratagem to make money. The head of the band, a South American who passed himself off for Marquis Eduardo de Valfernio, had found several millionaires in the United States ready to plank down $300,000 for the "Mona Lisa." An accomplice of the self-styled marquis, Yves Chaudron, a restorer artist from Marseilles, made six copies of the painting. When the world learned of the theft, all the copies were sold as originals. Whereupon the swindlers disappeared leaving the original with an assistant. In the end the "Mona Lisa" returned safely back to the Louvre.

In the three quarters of a century since then, stealing works of art has become common practice in many Western countries.

The growing interest of Western moneybags in art objects is easy to explain. More often than not they are attracted to paintings and sculptures by famous masters not for their artistic value but as hard currency that can ride out any financial and economic storm. The market value of art objects in the capitalist world is constantly growing. Their prices in the official world market increased more than tenfold between 1946 and 1980. And the illegal black market for stolen treasures has assumed unprecedented proportions. Traffic in stolen art objects in the West is second only to drug traffic.

According to official figures published in Italy last year, cultural treasures stolen in the past 15 years from Catholic cathedrals, museums and private collections include 51,295 paintings (among them Raphaels, Tiepolos, Botticellis), 15,301 sculptures, about 60,000 items of church plate, and 13,064 rare archeological finds. Some of these objects have been tracked down by a special team set up to combat such thefts, but this is only a drop in the ocean.

The most frequent targets of burglars are churches and provincial museums that have no burglar alarm and no permanent guard. But carefully guarded world-famous museums are also burgled. Last year a 17th-century painting was stolen from the Capitol Museum in Rome in broad daylight. A few days later the criminal tried to break in there at night. This time he was spotted by police. When they called out to him he opened fire and made his escape.

The Italian public has long been sounding the alarm over the fact that famous picture

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When Georges de La Tour painted this picture in the mid-17th century he could hardly have suspected that three and a half centuries later his masterpiece would be guarded day and night by three security men and a police dog. But after the thefts from the Marmottan gallery these security measures had to be taken before the painting was auctioned in Paris.

Photo from Paris-Match (France)

galleries that attract millions of tourists to Italy every year are overcrowded, understaffed, underguarded, and do not have enough money to restore their exhibits.

"One can bring a bagful of arms, dynamite and handbombs into the Uffizi Gallery without anyone giving a second look. The cloakroom is as deserted as the Sahara." This is how the Milan magazine Panorama described an ordinary day in the life of one of the most famous shrines of world art. "You can go up close to paintings and sketches, touch them, smudge them, scratch, and even tear them. The few attendants engulfed by the crowd could not prevent it.

"What future is in store for the museum?" asks Panorama. "Ten years ago there was the Grand Uffizi Project to expand the gallery by adding more halls to it. All that remains of the grand project is a big crane in the museum's courtyard. All these years the administration of the gallery has been paying the city authorities for the hire of the crane which now towers motionless against the sky of Florence."

The rash of thefts has led the authorities in some Western countries to set up a special police branch to search for stolen art treasures. The first such service was organized in Britain in 1961 following the much-publicized disappearance of the portrait of the "Duke of Wellington" by the great Spanish master Francisco Goya from the London National Gallery. The fine arts department set up at Scotland Yard tracked down the painting and thus established a reputation for itself. Incidentally, the man who stole the masterpiece turned out to be not a professional thief, but an unemployed truck driver whose action, as he had said, was prompted not by greed, but by anger over the British government's decision to deprive old-age pensioners of rebates in television rates.

The French counterpart of the department, set up in 1972 by the Central Directorate of the Criminal Police, has also a few feathers in its cap. Its first major success was the search for the "Portrait of Harlequin," an early masterpiece by Picasso. The painting, valued at $300,000, was stolen from a Picasso jubilee exhibition in Paris in November 1971. The French detectives came upon the tracks of a band that smuggled stolen art treasures from Europe to underground collectors in the United States and the Middle East. In addition to the "Harlequin," they tracked down 12 paintings and other art treasures stolen from French museums and private collections.

Picasso is in general much favoured by thieves and their clients. In 1973 eleven Picasso paintings were stolen from a French museum, and three years later armed bandits stole 118 of his paintings and drawings from the former papal palace in Avignon in the south of France. Luckily, the treasures were found. With the help of Interpol—the International Criminal Police Organization—French detectives seized them from traffickers. But this does not always happen.

According to the UNESCO International Council of Museums, the value of treasures stolen in various countries reached several billion dollars by 1980. But of course it is not so much the money that counts as the fact that tens of thousands of art and historical treasures have been lost for humanity. And the sad list continues to grow.

Last autumn masterpieces from the Marmottan, one of the richest Paris museums, were added. Several "art scholars" forced the few visitors at gun point to lie down, locked the attendants in the cloakroom, and proceeded with notable expertise to select the most valuable paintings. The whole operation lasted five minutes. The burglar alarm system was out of order that day. By the time the police arrived on the scene the raiders had made their getaway in a car lost amid the heavy city traffic.

The Marmottan lost its finest and costliest canvases. "It is a national disaster," raged the museum's chief curator, Yves Brayer. The French newspapers described the burglary as "the theft of the century." The "haul" included masterpieces by Impressionists, such as Claude Monet's "Impression. The Rising Sun," that gave its name to the whole Impressionist school. In addition to that remarkable seascape, painted in 1872, the gangsters seized four other paintings by Monet, and two canvases by Auguste Renoir, his famous "Bather" and "Portrait of Monet."

Experts believe that such famous paintings should be very difficult to sell. The police are inclined to think that the purpose of the theft is blackmail. Not everyone agrees, however. "The careful way in which the gangsters selected their booty and the fact that it is practically impossible to sell such famous works," writes Paris-Match, "suggests an order from some secret collector of paintings." The paintings from the Marmottan museum, writes France-Soir, may well be far away, somewhere in the Middle East or North America, in the possession of some wealthy art connoisseur who may be enjoying them alone without any qualms of conscience. According to Le Matin, the stolen masterpieces may find their way into one of the black markets in the West. Yves Brayer is also pessimistic because a sojourn in the backyards of the art world would cause irreparable damage to the masterpieces. If, that is, they could ever be recovered, as in the case of the first "theft of the century" in 1911.

Which brings us back to the "Mona Lisa." Leonardo da Vinci painted it in Italy and in 1516 took it to France, where he went at the invitation of King François I. The last refuge of the Renaissance titan was the castle of Cloux near Amboise on the Loire River. He died there shortly after sunrise on May 2, 1519, after casting a last glance (so legend has it) at his masterpiece brought to his deathbed by his pupil, Francesco Melzi.

The "Mona Lisa" has not been immune to the ravages of time. The colours have faded. A cobweb of "wrinkles" has covered the face, neck and hands. But the smile is as beautiful, enigmatic and tantalizing as ever. And it still attracts millions of people yearning for art and beauty.

It is a pity, of course, that people now have to admire the "Mona Lisa" through a protecting screen which was put up after the theft. And today the most famous portrait in the history of painting has its personal guards.

A member of the Louvre staff devoted many years of his life to "La Gioconda." He gave up a much more profitable occupation as manager of a button factory to take up guard duty beside the painting. For more than twenty years he stood guard duty beside the "Mona Lisa" throughout the hours the museum was open to the public. He used to come to the museum every day half an hour before opening time to gaze on the great work in private.

I do not know if that loyal guard is still alive. I have been to the Louvre several times in recent years, but I have not seen him.

Albert PIN

TAKING UP A POINT

Upon retiring from government posts, U.S. hawks quite often turn into doves. Why is it that, vested with responsibility and having access to state secrets and a hand in state affairs, they behave less reasonably than they do as ordinary citizens?

V. SHALIMOV
Syktyvkar, U.S.S.R.

Our Associate Editor VLADIMIR RUBTSOV replies:

Such transformations are indeed quite frequent. In retirement many United States' ex-presidents, secretaries of state, generals, admirals and even inventors of weapons of mass destruction are apt to express ideas which seem not to have occurred to them in office. Does this in fact change anything? Alas, nothing. Such sobermindedness is belated, and the hawks now in high places do not draw upon the experience of retired doves.

Nevertheless, your question provides an opportunity to discuss certain aspects of American political life which make it look like a stage play complete with "good guys" and "bad guys," or a masquerade in which the participants occasionally exchange masks. In a theatre, the audience knows all along that what it sees on the stage is make-believe, while developments on the political scene are often taken for real. It takes years for some illusions to crumble, and this only if one of the actors reveals, in his memoirs, the details of the part he played. It turned out, for instance, that when General Eisenhower took office as President, he had agreed in advance with John Foster Dulles, his Secretary of State, on the roles each would take. By contrast with their professions, and to add spice to the show, lawyer and diplomat Dulles played a "rogue," and the general—a meekish liberal.

But let us recall the breakdown of the Paris summit in the spring of 1960, when President Eisenhower proved not to be "true to type" and admitted responsibility for the spy plane that had intruded into our airspace and was downed near Sverdlovsk on May 1. Was he playing the part of a hawk or a dove? Any answer to this question would be of dubious value and I would therefore rather cite more examples from the recent past.

As Vice-President under Eisenhower, Richard Nixon gained notoriety as an active witch-hunter and instigator of anti-communist hysteria. That was in the late fifties. In the late sixties Nixon, the Republican Party hard-line candidate for President, won the election. In the course of the campaign he got his information on foreign policy matters from Richard Allen, who was widely expected to be appointed the President's national security adviser. Allen did become national security adviser, but under Reagan rather than Nixon, a decade later. As for Nixon himself, he chose to change his image shortly afterwards.

The following circumstance attendant on Henry Kissinger's appearance on the political scene under Nixon is noteworthy in this connection. A Harvard professor and author of a number of books on history and foreign policy, Kissinger gave consultations to Nelson Rockefeller, another contender for the Republican nomination for the presidency, who lost to Nixon at the party convention. The loser, nevertheless, handed Kissinger over to the winner, complete with all his ideas about the balance of forces and American foreign policy in the nuclear age. Then, out of the blue, an amazed public was confronted by "a new Nixon," determined to try a different policy, one of international détente and peaceful cooperation with the U.S.S.R.

In attempting to ascertain the role Nixon played in history, a complaint voiced by another President, John Kennedy, should be borne in mind. Kennedy once grumbled to a friend that probably the only decision he could take on his own was to have the layout of the White House lawn changed. At the end of his career, Eisenhower condemned the military-industrial complex and pointed to new dangers associated with it. On his deathbed, Dulles admitted he had made foreign policy mistakes. One should never forget, of course, that the personages on the American political scene always remain play-acting politicians, even when they write their memoirs. Their words should always be matched against their actions and the net results of their actions which they leave as a legacy to their successors.

The words of American politicians which **can** be taken at their face value are those addressed to their own kind rather than to the general public. I mean statements such as one Henry Kissinger made in Washington's National Press Club before retiring from the post of Secretary of State: "We cannot pretend to ourselves that the foreign policy of a great nation can change every four or eight years. That pretence itself is a factor of instability in the world." He is right here, of course: American foreign policy is continuous. Behind the scenes, Republican Presidents take up where Democrats leave off, and vice versa. This cannot be otherwise because all political problems are connected, in the last analysis, with the problem of power. Had every president been capable of pursuing his own policy, notions like the ruling class, the interests of this class, and so on, would have lost all meaning. Politicians are supposed to take these interests into account if they are to keep their posts.

What compels Western politicians to play-act is that they are condemned to serve two kinds of masters—real and nominal. The real masters lurk behind the scenes, and the nominal masters are in the audience. The nominal masters decide the outcome of the elections, have to be promised the moon and curried favour with. The real masters need no fine-sounding talk; they need discreet action which suits their interests.

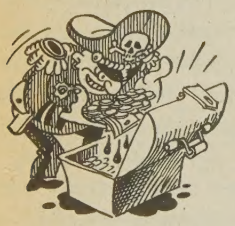
The statesmen themselves (and the political groupings supporting them) are in competition with each other, of course. As far as their personal careers are concerned, the contest may even be described as tooth-and-nail. It includes statesmen's clashes on foreign policy matters and is even dramatized for the benefit of the public. But, to quote the American foreign policy expert Richard Falk, "representative democracy on these issues is basically a delusion." ■

POSTSCRIPT

Its Answer

What does the Reagan Administration's National Endowment for Democracy actually do? In France, as we have already reported, it finances arch-reactionary organizations. Now a CBS TV correspondent notes that the Endowment is doing the same thing elsewhere in Western Europe, more specifically, in Spain and Portugal. He asks whether the U.S. really should be financing, even indirectly, organizations opposed to friendly, democratically elected governments. The Reagan Administration provides its own answer: everywhere it supports the most arrant reactionaries.

He and His Kin



In Paraguay even the legal opposition parties, hitherto accustomed to "toeing the line," are talking about corruption nowadays. In a published communiqué, the Revolutionary Febrerista Party comments on the "deep-rooted degeneration of institutions controlled by the regime's men." However, President Alfredo Stroessner prefers to stay aloof. This is predictable in a dictator, whose favourite pastime, according to New York Times magazine, is counting his money. For giving asylum to escaped nazis, Stroessner Jr. accepted payolas from their patrons, who preferred to remain anonymous, while General Andres Rodriguez, another close Stroessner relation, has grown fat out of the traffic in drugs.

Bleak Start

Last year one in four students in the U.S. would not have been able to attend college without getting a loan from the bank, the F.R.G. newspaper Stuttgarter Zeitung reports. No wonder hundreds of thousands of U.S. university and college graduates start life in the red, with many, moreover, swelling the ranks of the unemployed.

"Safe House"

More and more windows in U.S. cities and towns carry the notice: "safe house." They are occupied by what are known as "helping-hand families"—actually voluntary vigilantes helping the police fight rising crime. Whenever an individual adult or child is menaced, as is often the case, he or she is advised to seek refuge in a "safe house," the F.R.G. magazine Der Spiegel tells us.

Snail Mail

Bavarian Landtag deputy Gantzer, the West Berlin newspaper Der Tagesspiegel informs us, has complained to the Federal Minister of Posts about a business letter he sent from Munich to neighbouring Unterschleissheim which was returned almost a year later. He termed this "snail mail," as it took the letter 351 days to cover 30 kilometres, a rate of less than four metres an hour.

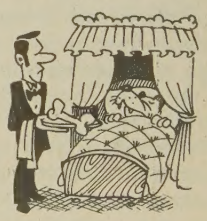
Pirating Famine Relief

Besides the box office takings from the great Africa famine relief concerts at Wembley and in Philadelphia, it was intended to swell the relief funds by sales of videocassettes of the concerts. However, for legal reasons, the cassettes could not be officially marketed. This was a windfall for rapacious businessmen, who organized pirate versions of the cassettes, of which some one and a half million have already been sold around the world. The money the pirates pocketed could have been used to purchase food and medicine for the famine victims, popular singer Bob Geldof, one of the Wembley concert organizers, declared.

For a Future in Crime

In a programme dealing with rising teenage crime NBC television noted that U.S. jails, far from reforming the increasing number of teenagers sentenced to long prison terms for murder, armed assault, and rape, rather serve as training schools for a future life of crime.

A Dog's Life



Harrod's of London now offers wealthy dog-owners hand-made fourposters, the West German newspaper Süddeutsche Zeitung reports. The enterprising Bill Nicol, who offered the famous London store the first batch of luxury beds for dogs, has been asked to provide more, as the initial consignment failed to satisfy demand.

Drawings by V. Trinchenko

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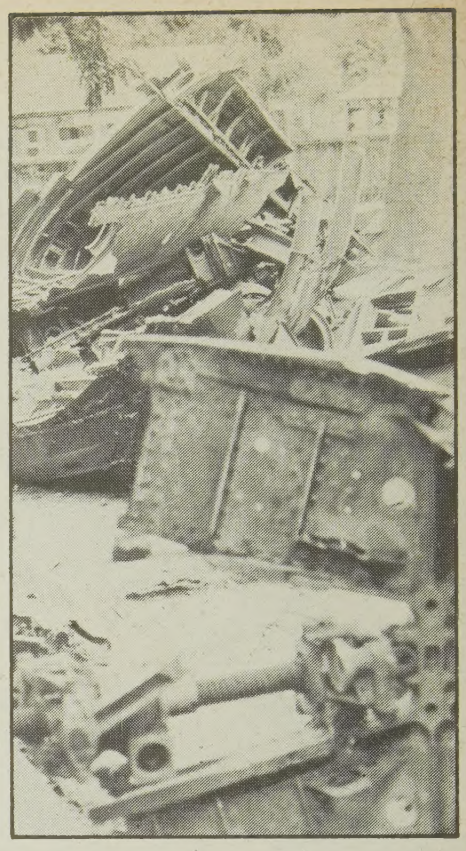


WITNESS FOR THE PROSECUTION

A Boeing fell on the city right here. The enormous hole it made gradually filled up with water. The plane is still visible at the bottom, although locals pulled some of the fragments out and stacked them beyond the fence. They cannot name those who were on the plane. The little girl in the picture does not know anything about the incident at all because she was born after the war, but the man actually saw it happen. He was on duty near an ack-ack gun on the very day the huge 100-ton B-52 aircraft, rent asunder by an orange-coloured explosion, came down on the housetops, with hardly a molecule of its ill-starred crew intact.

Another unidentified bomber was downed north of this pond, outside Hanoi. Indeed, the list of USAF planes shot down over Vietnam is almost endless.

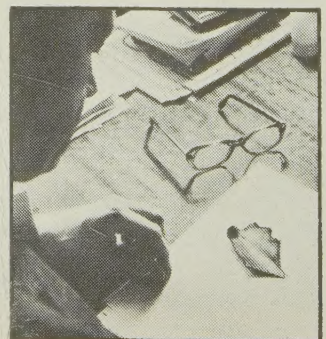
Thirteen years later, at the end of 1985, a group of U.S. experts led by Colonel J.B. Harvey arrived at Hanoi airport under an agreement concluded with the Vietnamese authorities. As they walked across the airfield, escorted by Vietnamese diplomats, the experts managed to smile, nodded greetings to Hanoi citizens, and tried to put on a bold front. Their mission was to gather information about U.S. citizens who had been reported missing, and they were ill at ease in Hanoi in their U.S. Army uniforms. The Vietnamese smiled at them politely.

Combat engineers pointed out the place north of Hanoi where the bomber had crashed. A power shovel cut nine metres deep into the caked earth, and a truck-mounted crane pulled out fragments of the B-52 and some human remains.

The crew were never identified. It was only established that the plane had taken off from a U.S. air base in Saigon, that it carried missiles of high homing accuracy guaranteed to hit a bridge pier from a distance of 100-200 km, and that it had been manned by youths ordered to destroy the bridge, as well as the city and the population of a country half a world away from U.S. shores.

Colonel Harvey said, with justice, that the Vietnam war had taken a heavy toll in young American lives and left a wound in his nation's soul. For that reason some Americans ask that the Vietnamese and everyone else should respect the feelings of U.S. citizens.

The Vietnamese, on the other hand, believe that no men of conscience would have done what the Americans did to their country. This brings us to the sphere of diplomacy and even international relations.



I picked up the fragment you see in the photo near the pond in Hanoi. In my bag it completed its journey round the world and flew, on New Year's eve, over Thailand, the Indian Ocean, Pakistan, the Middle East, and Turkey, over some of the many U.S. air bases and missile launching sites strung across the globe, over other Boeings ready for take-off (this time with nuclear weapons on board), and over missile-carrying, atomic-powered filibusters cruising under U.S. Navy pennants.

As I write, the B-52 fragment picked up in Southeast Asia lies on my desk. I ask the citizens of America if anyone of them can identify a dead son, husband or father from this piece of duralumin. Hardly so. What then are the chances of a new war, were one to take place, leaving anything behind other than unidentifiable fragments of our burnt-out and lifeless planet?

B. KOZLOV

Photos by author

THE WORLD IN PICTURES